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HM

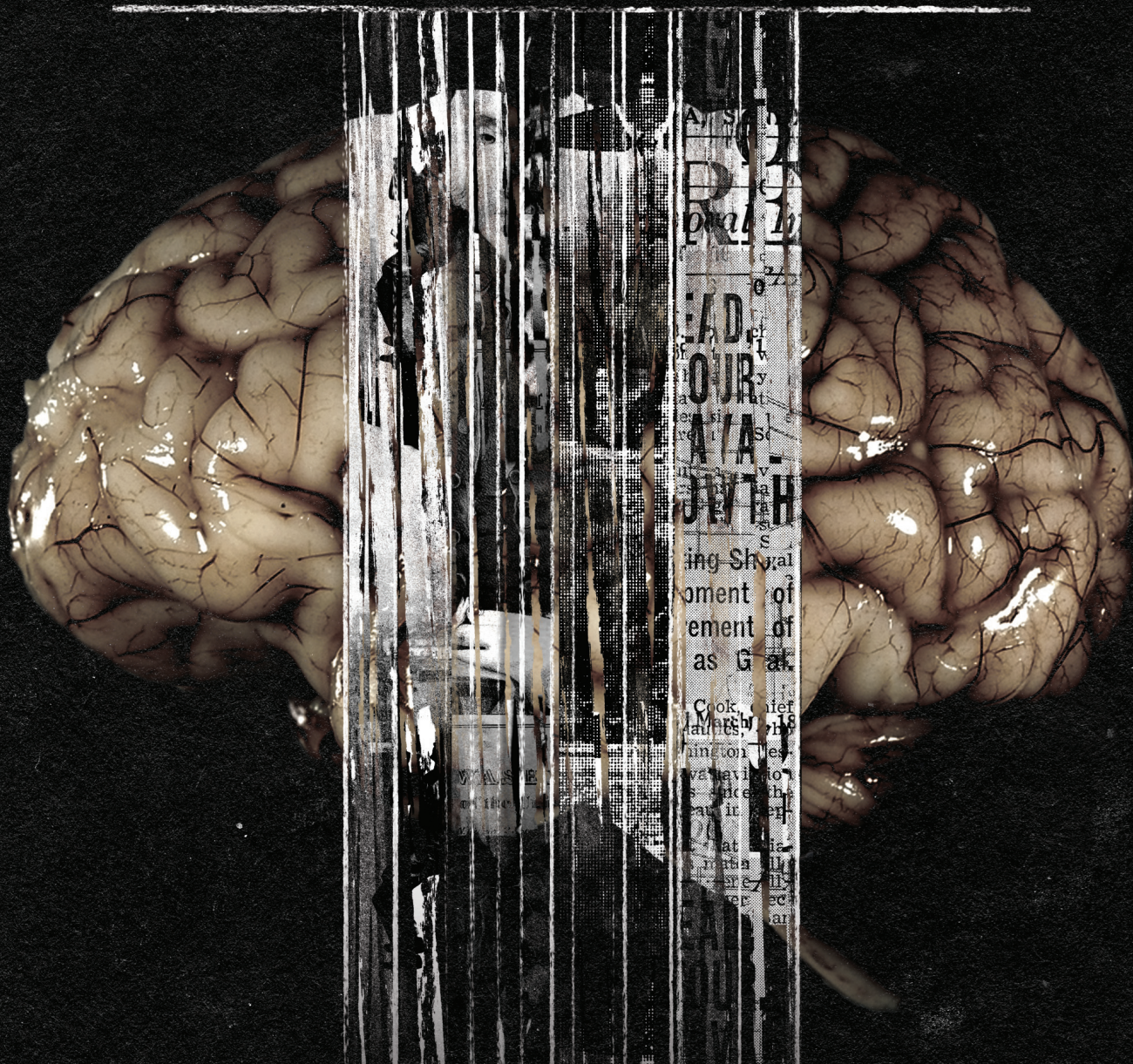
THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE®

September 2012 • Issue Number 159
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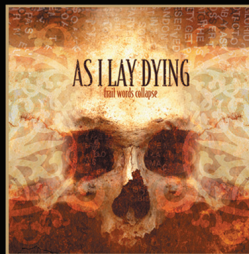
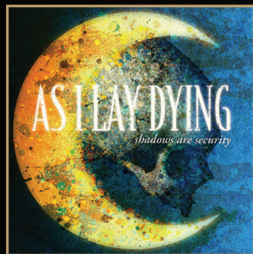
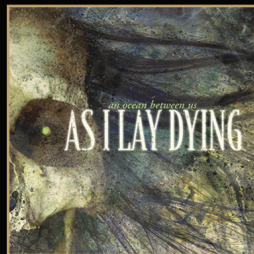


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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

GOD IS CLOSE TO THE BROKEN HEARTED...

...and He saves those who are crushed in spirit. I love that verse in Psalm 34. It is far and away my favorite Psalm. It's got Messianic prophecy in it, it's a call to worship and it tells it like it is in real life. I just love the proximity that our God places Himself in within our lives. I suppose we have to let Him in on some level, but the choice is an easy one. He is so awesome.

I'd like to welcome Tourniquet back to the cover of this magazine. This'll be their fourth time to grace it all by themselves. In an interesting question of my sanity, they were an inset photo on issue #31, which had X-Sinner on the cover, who were releasing its *Peace Treaty* album. I think *Psycho Surgery* warranted switching to two bands, but the past is the past. I can only criticize myself so much (and X-Sinner was and is still a good rockin' band not to be discredited). Thanks, once again, to our merger with *Heaven's Metal Fanzine*, this issue of *HM* is a big one – 80 pages of hard music loveliness.

I often use this section to ask you to help HM Magazine (like liking us on Facebook. com/HM.Magazine, listening to our free Podcast (podcast.hmmag.com) and following us on twitter.com/HM_mag, but I want to now ask, "What can we do for you? Is there something you're missing in our coverage? Something you wish we'd cover better? What? What? Let me know. Email me at editor@hmmag. com and let me know the details and your suggestions.

SPINNING AT HM NOW

CELLOWELLER	<i>Wish Upon A Blackstar</i>	Still tickling my electronica itch.
7 HORNS 7 EYES	<i>Throes of Absolution</i>	This band is a must-know for you. Trust me.
TOURNIQUET	<i>Antiseptic Bloodbath</i>	This one is getting better with each listen! Me like.
ANDREW PETERSON	<i>Light for the Lost Boy</i>	An amazing, creative & gifted artist with a great voice.
BTA	<i>I Am</i>	Our reviewer didn't get it in time, so let me say, "Rules!"
PASSION	<i>White Flag</i>	Great worship tunes that make me wanna sing.
AS I LAY DYING	<i>Awakened</i>	I love this band. Live or on CD, they're just great.
THE MODERN POST	<i>Grace Alone</i>	"White as Snow" is a great worship tune. Wow!

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Letters to the Editor

HM



JOSHUA GETS THE COVER

We finally made the cover of this magazine that has been holding out on me. They have always done the best articles ... but never the cover. *Resurrection* was too great to be denied.

—Joshua Perhaia, via facebook

Ed – Our pleasure, my friend.

P.O.D. COVER STORY

The piece on P.O.D. was very powerful! What an awesome bunch of guys w/ a real heart for the lost!

—Aron Dietzel, via facebook

BACK ISSUES IN PDF ON CD-ROM

How come *Heaven's Metal Magazines* from the 1st issue in 1985 through the '90s isn't available on an archived searchable CD-ROM? I would seriously pay upwards to 50 bucks for a disk containing the classic issues of *Heaven's Metal*. If I, as one person, would pay that amount, surely it's worth the time for whoever has the archived issues to scan them out and put them in a PDF format (if they're not already scanned out). That would be amazing to have a treasure like that on one disc. Multitudes of magazines can be bought on CD-Rom/DVD-Rom nowadays... Why not the old Heaven's Metal? Just another metal lover from the '80s.

—Jim Willis, via email

Ed – The quick answer: Time. I don't have it, but the good news is that this email conversation has progressed towards a solution and some cool folks working on making this available through HM Magazine. Hopefully, we'll have an announcement soon.

IS THAT A COUNTRY BAND?

I miss the Galactic Cowboys. I love Gristle and Crunchy, though.

—Brian, via website

Ed – For the record, the self-titled debut album by Galactic Cowboys was the best album ever to be released in the entire universe ... and I say that objectively – I assure you!

KINDLE YOUR PASSIONS

is there a way to download or view the magazine on a kindle fire? I used to get them through Amazon's kindle store, but can not do so any longer, nor can I view the hmmagazine site, or the issues therein adequately on the kindle's web browser.

—Josh Johnson, via email

Ed – Try the PDF trick that Troy talks about below.

READING HM ON MY IPHONE

As you know, I've been having a hard time reading and zooming in on the digital issues of HM Magazine on my iPhone. I tried it on a few of my friend's iPhones, and still got the same problem. But I found a great workaround: I temporarily went back to reading the mag on my desktop, and quickly noticed a "letter to the editor," where the reader was able to download the magazine in pdf. COOL! So, I figured out how to download the full .pdf file to my desktop, then uploaded it to my "Google documents" account, and downloaded a .pdf reader app for the iPhone. Now I can keep one loaded on the phone at all times in the pdf reader, and I can easily turn pages & zoom. Love it. Thanks again for your time.

—Troy Nelsen, via email

Ed – I love it when smart people like you figure this stuff out (and then share the info with the rest of us. You rock, Troy.

DAMIEN DEADSON

Go ahead and get back to playing metal and I am sorry you are having to deal with being labelled and accused of being who you and your band is not. Personally, I appreciated when the metal was second, and Jesus was first. I am thankful you are not burying your talents, but wish that you were still using them to glorify the one true God. Love and peace to you, man, and I hope your journey finds you well with your new band and band-mates.

—Randall Evans, via website

Ed – Indeed, Damien's departure from Demon Hunter and his new press released statements regarding his new project (Damien Deadson) has caused much discussion online. Being honest and upfront about things seems to be the best approach, which is what it appears this artist is doing.

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"My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice."
(Psalm 34:2)

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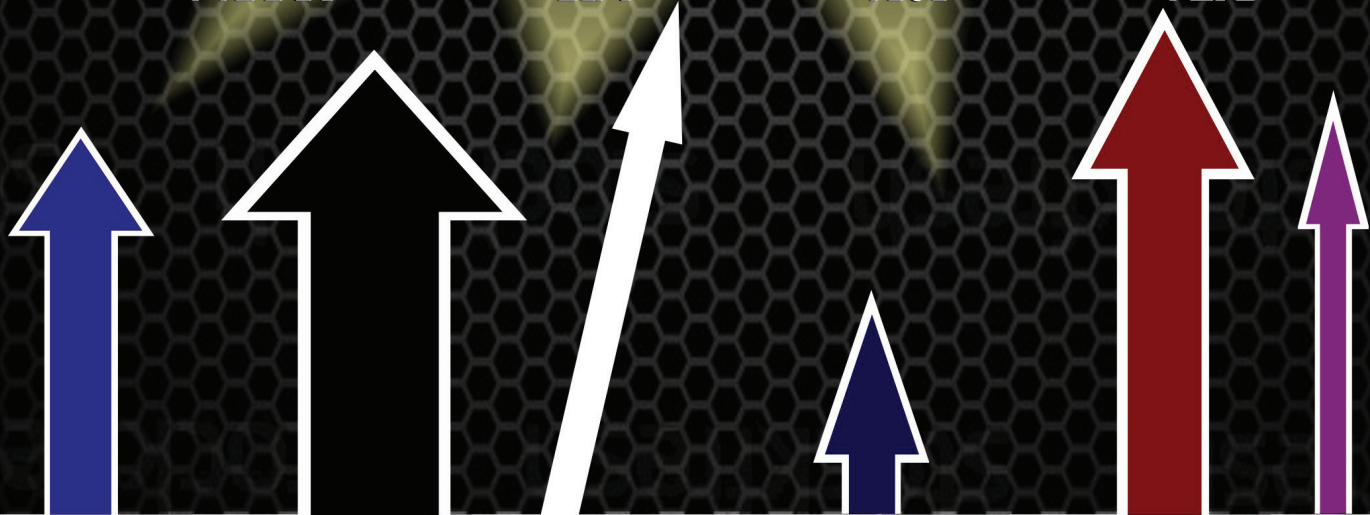
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Messenger's New CD 'You Choose' In Stores Now!!

This CD has more of the great guitar sounds and songs you *CRANK!!* It comes with the same mind blowing, dynamic sound production as their first well-reviewed CD, "I'm Talking To You".

In an HM Mag story, Steve Rowe says, "(You Choose) is 'a *HUGE leap ahead from the Band's Debut "I'm Talking To You" in both song writing and Production!"* (Rowe Productions)

Messenger's highly anticipated new studio CD is available for download at the following retailers (hard copy CD at CD Baby):



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ABR STREAMS NEW SONG

"FLURRIES" STREAMING ONLINE

August Burns Red is releasing *Sleddin' Hill*, A Holiday Album on October 9th from Solid State Records. ABR are pleased to share "Flurries," the first new track revealed from the album. "'Flurries' is one of two original songs I wrote for the record," says guitarist JB Brubaker. "It's the first track on *Sleddin' Hill* and it's a dynamic song that begins with a big build-up before kicking into gear. We were able to play with all sorts of layers in this song including strings, lots of different bells and booming war drums. I definitely think the song sets the tone for what is to come on the rest of the record." (Listen at augustburnsred.com) Leading up the release of *Sleddin' Hill*, ABR is set to launch a five-week, 30-city North American tour today with support from Of Mice & Men, The Color Morale and The Overseer, before heading back to Europe where they'll hit 12 countries in four weeks.



AMBASSADORS OF SHALOM SIGN

THUMPER PUNK RECORDS ADDS 'EM

Ambassadors of Shalom, an up-and-coming three-piece punk band from Manchester, England, have joined the Thumper Punk Records family of bands. Forged together after playing an open-mike night in Stoke, the in-ya-face British Christian Punk outfit plays for their love of Jesus, people and loud music. The band's desire is to see British culture redeemed, and they are praying that God will use their music and lyrics to deliver the Good News of the Gospel in the United Kingdom and beyond. Ambassadors of Shalom are Neil Roddy (guitar and lead vocals), Peter Field (bass and backing vocals), and Joseph Wilson (drums). Ambassadors of Shalom will be heading into the studios in September to record their first EP for release on Thumper Punk Records. You can next catch Ambassadors of Shalom on September 15, 2012, at The Famous Lion, Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom.



News bullets

The Metal Bible (New Testaments with heavy metal musician testimonies edited inside) is now available in Spanish and Polish editions. "We are currently working hard with a version in Portuguese, Russian, Italian, Slovak, Danish, Finnish and Norwegian."

The Devil Wears Prada is headlining Ohio's Rockapalooza.

The Insyderz release their sixth studio album on 9/3/12 exclusively at insyderz.com. The band will be playing their hometown record release party with Five Iron Frenzy at the Royal Oak Music Theatre (Royal Oak, MI) on Friday, November 16, 2012.

Classic metal label Frontline Records has announced the first in a series of podcasts that includes Christian music from the '80s, '90s and early 2000's. Host **Brian Healy** brings unique and light commentary. "The purpose of the program is for nostalgia, re-exploration and introduction with the artist and industry insiders who made it possible. It is entertainment for new and veteran listeners alike." The Podcast launched Labor Day weekend.

Fyleaf are gearing up for the release of their brand new video for "New Horizons," the single from the band's upcoming album of the same name. The video premieres September 4th on Fuse.

Onward to Olympus are back with their third release *Indicator*. The 12-song album was engineered by Taylor Larson (Periphery, Life on Repeat) at Oceanic Studios and is the band's heaviest and most dynamic to date. After years of non-stop touring in support of their first 2 albums, OTO have built a diehard fan base from the ground up that are eagerly awaiting the release of *Indicator*. The album will be released on October 9.

Triple Crown Records is releasing *Basement Window*, the new EP from **O'Brother**. The EP is a bit of a sonic departure for the band, stripping down and re-arranging a few of their favorites from their debut full-length *Garden Window*. It will be released digitally September 18th and include a bonus track not on the vinyl release. Vinyl will be released October 30th.

The Classic Crime self-releases new album

Not long ago the future seemed, at best, uncertain for The Classic Crime. Propelled forward by the success of their Kickstarter campaign, (incidentally the 9th most funded music project in Kickstarter history), The Classic Crime is presently in the latter portion of a successful West Coast tour, and have also managed to chart their self-produced and self-released album, *Phoenix*, on both iTunes and Billboard. "*Phoenix* is our rebirth," frontman and songwriter Matt MacDonald reflects. "Conceptually, it's about the time spent in the ashes, between death and this new life, wondering if we'd ever get out. The whole process has restored our hope in the value of what we do. Our Kickstarter backers have revived our confidence in the fact that we are not alone and there is still work to be done." *Phoenix* is available in major chain stores, like Best Buy, FYE, Hastings, Lifeway and Amazon and iTunes, of course.



Industry Profile: Hellbound?

KEVIN MILLER IS A SCREENWRITER, DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER THAT HAD A BOOTH AT CORNERSTONE PROMOTING HIS NEW, FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY, *HELLBOUND?*, TAKES A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE OF HELL. IT HITS THEATERS THIS SEPTEMBER. WE ASKED HIM ABOUT THE MOVIE AND ITS INSPIRATION AND CHALLENGES.

How did the desire to make this documentary/movie come about?

I was first inspired to make this movie back in the fall of 2008 while editing a book called *Her Gates Will Never Be Shut: Hope, Hell and the New Jerusalem* by Brad Jersak. Brad's approach to the subject was simple: If we're going to be biblical about hell, let's really be biblical. In other words, rather than reading the text selectively to support what we already believe, let's set our theological biases aside and listen to everything the Bible has to say about post-mortem punishment. That means examining all of the words typically translated as hell (sheol, Gehenna, Tartarus, Hades), all of the images of judgment (the lake of fire, outer darkness, etc.) and various interpretive traditions throughout Jewish and Christian history.

I came away from that experience realizing the Bible is absolutely polyphonic on this issue. Contrary to popular belief, there is no single, unified voice speaking throughout the text. Instead, some voices cry out for divine wrath and punishment. Others beg for mercy. Some seem to indicate that the wicked will suffer for eternity. Others imply the wicked will be utterly destroyed. And still other voices hold out hope that all people will ultimately be reconciled to God. What are we to make of this? I think many Christians – particularly evangelicals – go to the Bible expecting to find a series of objective statements that will settle the matter decisively. Instead we find a lively conversation where competing viewpoints aren't just maintained, they're encouraged. This might be problematic for some Christians who mistakenly regard the Bible as a single book. However, if we understand the Bible for what it truly is – a theological library – this is exactly what we should expect to find. I take this as an invitation to continue the conversation today, making sure not to shut down dissenting voices.

I knew right away I wanted to make a film on this topic, because I suspected most Christians (and non-Christians) were as ignorant as I was before I started on Brad's book. We've all heard the "hell story," and we all assume there is really only one way of looking at it – at least if you want to call yourself an orthodox Christian. I was eager to explore alternate ways of reading the text to see if you really could maintain an alternate

view, such as universalism, and still regard yourself as a thoroughly biblical and Christ-centered believer.

It wasn't until January 2011 that I finally found myself in a position to think seriously about making the film. I was about to turn 40, and after years of working as a screenwriter-for-hire, I decided it was finally time to strike out on my own. Call it a mid-life crisis. So I literally started doing one thing each day to make the film a reality. That led to two things per day and more until I found myself working on it full time – booking interviews, budgeting, etc. – all without a single dollar behind the project. About two months into this process, Rob Bell came out with his book *Love Wins*. Within weeks, hell was literally on the front page of *TIME* magazine. So if I had any doubts about the timeliness of the topic, they were quickly erased. But I still didn't know how I was going to pull the film off. Finally, about three weeks before production was slated to begin, I connected with an investor named Dave Krysko who bought into my vision. Before we knew it, we were flying to Copenhagen to do our first shoot.

How awkward or difficult was it for you to remain objective and balanced in airing various viewpoints of Hell, God, Christianity, Jesus, etc?

The question of objectivity always comes up around documentaries. I think this represents a bit of naivety on the part of viewers. My facetious answer is that *Hellbound?* is about as objective as the people watching it, which is to say, not very! What people don't realize is that the moment you decide to interview one person and not another, to film one event and not another, to point your camera in one direction and not another, to choose one shot and over another in the editing room and so on, it's subjectivity all the way down. I think people try to hold filmmakers to a level of objectivity they are unwilling to abide by themselves. None of us are objective beings; we all experience the world subjectively, so naturally any work of art is going to reflect the filmmaker's bias. The only relevant question to my mind is, are you aware of your bias? If so, are you able to defend it?

[To see full-length interview, go to hmmag.com]

The Chariot will head out on tour with **For Today** through the fall before finishing out the year supporting *Every Time I Die*.

Impending Doom, **Sleeping Giant**, **Texas in July** and **Hundredth** are also playing several of these dates with headliners *For Today*. Following that leg, *For Today* will be hitting a few European dates in early December as well.

Rox Records are releasing a special 20th Anniversary compilation – *Heart of Metal: 20 Years of Ultimatum*.

Stryper is releasing a live DVD on MVD Entertainment on October 23rd, called *Live in Indonesia at Java Rockin' Land*. festival in Indonesia. "This show was an unexpected, but welcomed, addition to our tour schedule," said Michael Sweet (singer, guitarist, songwriter). "It was added last minute and we scrambled to make it happen, but I'm glad it worked out. It was an opportunity to go to a primarily Muslim country and share our faith."

Josh Garrels has launched a fundraiser campaign to build a studio. (joshgarrels.com/studio-campaign/)

12 Stones is hitting the road on its *Beneath the Scars Tour* with **Project 86** and **I Am Empire**.

John Mark McMillan is re-issuing *The Song Inside the Sounds of Breaking Down*, which has been digitally remastered and re-mixed, featuring three never-before-released songs. He is heading out on the *Economy Class Fall Tour* on Sept. 10.

Harp & Lyre are releasing a new album this fall – *Tribes*.

These Hearts are releasing a digital EP titled *Elephant In The Room*.

Green River Ordinance is heading out on a fall tour through Texas, the East Coast and up to Midwest.

Thrice is releasing a 4-LP/2-CD live album (*Anthology*) recorded on its farewell tour.

Derek Webb is releasing his new album, *Ctrl*, on September 4th.

LIVE REPORT

Relient K, House of Heroes, hellogoodbye, William Beckett

August 5

REVIEW AND PHOTOGRAPHY by DOUG VAN PELT

(Austin, TX) The new Emo's East location with its expansive live room and giant stage was rockin' in front of a near-capacity crowd made up of mostly young fans anxious to sing-along and sway to the tunes.

House of Heroes started off the quadruple bill with a fast set with no wasted moments between songs, starting off hard and speedy, playing many off their fantastic-sounding new album, *Cold Hard Want*. "A Man Who's Not Afraid" (the first track off the album) translated well in a live setting, as did the hard-riffing "Out My Way." The band's big vocal harmonies of the band were in full effect – most notable of which was the higher register of drummer Colin Rigsby.

It's hard to pick out what to appreciate the most about this band. Their instrumentation is tight and well-constructed. Musicians have to appreciate their "smart rock" and local chiropractors probably like 'em, too, as the chugging rhythms probably mean more business for tired necks the next day in each city they play.

The singing probably takes the cake, though. For example, the "Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh" BGVs in "Remember the Empire" sounded as tight as their studio recording. And the suddenly lower gang vocals that chant to the crowd, "Fear not my downcast brothers," are powerful and just sound so darn cool. The crowd was certainly pleased. "Touch This Light" slowed things down a little bit with a made-for-radio modern rock pace and whispery lead vocal delivery before each chorus rocked the audience upside the head, bringing out more "Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh's" to try to sing-along to.

Relient K closed out the night with an unexpected setlist that reached as far back as their first three albums, with "Sadie Hawkins Dance" and "Chap Stick, Chapped Lips, and Things Like Chemistry." They jumped into "Chap Stick" with the second song and had pretty much the entire crowd in their back pocket from then on out, clapping along. Like House of Heroes earlier in the night, Relient K didn't waste hardly any time between songs, but instead hammered out hit after hit for the appreciative crowd. This kept the energy high throughout the entire set, which didn't seem to fly by until it was all over and then you just realized that the band churned out some 17 or so songs on your jellified head. While Relient K might be seen as a feel-good or fun-time band, they are tight and rock pretty



darn hard at their shows. Hits like "Be My Escape" rock fast with its infectious hooks and nonchalant delivery. HOH's Tim Skipper came out and added guest vocals a few times, including "The Lining Is Silver" and "Forget and Not Slow Down."

The band's wit came across loud and clear throughout the set, with lines like "I tried to hold your hand, you'd rather hold your grudge" (from "Which To Bury, Us or the Hatchet").

They walked off stage having delivered a full set, but still came out and gave us four encores, which included "Sadie Hawkins Dance" and a brand new song called Collapsible Lung." While it was a tad disappointing not to hear their epic "Deathbed," it's not like they didn't bring it and "leave it all on the stage," because they rocked it hard for a solid 90 minutes.



Photos (clockwise from top): Relient K's Matt Thiessen; HOH's Colin Rigsby; Matt Thiessen; HOH's Tim Skipper (x2). [Photos by DVP]





Matt Slocum of Sixpence None the Richer
(Photo: Doug Van Pelt)



Chris McCane of Becoming the Archetype
(Photo: Natahsha Priya)

Album: *Beneath the Scars*
Label: Executive Music Group/EMG
Release Date: May 22, 2012
Members: Paul McCoy, vocals/guitar; Eric Weaver, guitars;
 Aaron Gainer, drums; Will Reed, bass
RYL: Red, Kutless, Thousand Foot Krutch

12stones.com

12 STONES

"I think this record is really a more angry approach to the way things are," 12 Stones singer Paul McCoy says about his band's latest release, *Beneath the Scars*. "Before it was always 'keep your head up and get through it,' and now it's more like, 'kick the door down and tell 'em enough is enough.' On our previous records our goal was to never record what we couldn't do live. On this record we said, 'Okay let's make a record that has no boundaries. If it sounds cool to have a kazoo in it, let's have a kazoo.' We ended up opting out of that one (laughs). We did a lot of co-writing on this record. There's a song on the record called 'Blind' that was written by Tyler Connolly from *Theory of a Deadman*. He pretty much gifted us that song. Blair Daly and Skidd Mills were involved in the writing. We wrote with Jason Rauch [Red] and tons of people to take in as many ideas and influences as we could and put the 12 Stones spin back on it.

"We have a song called 'Bulletproof' that came out that's about anti-bullying. It's about sticking up for yourself and turning the other cheek when you can. But everybody has a point where enough is enough and you have to stand up for yourself. We also have a

song called 'Worlds Collide' that went to number one on the Christian charts for almost eight weeks."

It's a few hours before 12 Stones will hit the stage at Hollywood's fabled venue, The Whisky a Go Go, and the atmosphere in the upstairs dressing room where we're talking is relaxed and breezy as the sound check from another band blares below. McCoy and his bandmates are celebrating a decade as a band. The 30-year old vocalist seems just as excited to be out on tour as any eager young upstart would be, despite the rigors of the road and the ever-changing climate of the music biz.

"It's very tough," says McCoy, who briefly experienced the music industry during its fatter, giddier times. The singer found a good measure of success early in his career providing guest vocals on the 2003 Evanescence hit "Bring Me to Life." The song won Grammys in 2004 for the Best Hard Rock Performance and Best New Artist.

"I don't even have a car," McCoy admits. "I

literally live on the road. There's no sleep a lot of times, and the way we operate these days we don't have a crew, so we load in our own gear, set up our own gear, tear it all down, and sell our own merch.

"I started this when I was 19 and I hope there's no end in sight. I love being a nomad. I love waking up in a new city every day and all the interesting people you get to meet just by being gone. This is what I love to do. For ten years I've seen a lot of amazing bands come and go because they didn't have the ability to just stay out here for nothing. I have such a great support system at home. Unfortunately, I sacrifice a lot in my home life, but, at the same time I'm living out of a suit case. It could be worse.

"We're about ready to have another song hit the radio called 'Psycho,'" the singer says with almost childlike enthusiasm. It's just about an old fashioned rock show, getting ready to lose yourself to the music and embrace it. What it's all about.

And the way 12 Stones played The Whisky later that evening ... psycho it was.

Album: *Make Amends*

Label: Facedown

Release Date: August 14, 2012

Members: Chris King, vocals; Mark Randazzo, guitar/vocals;

James Appleton, bass; Andy Amato, drums

RIYL: Shai Hulud, Unearth, As Cities Burn, Life in Your Way

facebook.com/lettertotheexiles

LETTER TO THE EXILES

With anger, negative energy and life experience constantly growing, Letter To The Exiles is ready to *Make Amends* and have fun.

"There is nothing we need to make amends for specifically," explains Chris King, the vocalist. We just came up with the name after we decided what kind of album we wanted to make. The guys and me try to gather ideas and then I try to put those ideas into lyric form. A lot of those ideas had a lot of aggression in it. The anger and contempt we held for the church, ourselves, old relationships, old friendships or family – a lot of that we wanted to translate that into music and put it into lyrics. Once we did that we realized those things are not really helping us. Those issues that we want to hold on to and portray artistically are not productive. So, what would be the next step? Where do we go after that? Once we discovered, 'Here is some negative aspects of life and how do we turn it around?' The first step would have been an act of letting go, I suppose, and thus we kind of came up with the title – *Make Amends*."

"We wrote two songs before we got into the studio. Maybe a year and half before. That was 'Open The Graves' and 'They Made Me the War Machine' and, at the time we were writing 'the War Machine,' we already had put out 'Open Graves' as a demo. That was me feeling out what I can do lyrically and vocally. 'War Machine' started out like I mentioned earlier – those more aggressive negative motivations for why you want to be in this kind of music. It was a very internal song for us and what was going on in the band. The past two years for how the band has grown has been kind of crazy. We all just had issues and fights with each other and what it just came to for me was kind of looking at how bands and people tend to do that to each other, and transform them into something they shouldn't be.

"The past year we have been really defining how we do things, how we work and how everything goes. As far as

practice, write, tour, and I think there is a learning curve for bands as they grow. They learn how to do things, they make mistakes and just figure out how to just be. As far as writing goes, I am always writing. If I've got an idea for a lyric or a song, I write it down. We are always on the phone with each other. Regardless of how far away we live from one another I can't get away from the guys. We're always on the phone somehow. Either they are calling me or I am calling them. Recently a lot of the conversations have been about the writing process and the album that is coming out. How we've expressed something. Me personally, I feel like we got something off our chest that we needed to get off our chest. Now we're starting conversations of what are we feeling now, and setting up times for shows and tours and we want to be writing by this time. It is something that has been really fun."

Album: *Fable*
Label: Joy Revolution
Release Date: August 21, 2012
Members: Benjamin Dunn and "a whole creative community of friends," too numerous to mention/list here.
RIYL: Mae, Josh Garrels, Foster the People, The Polyphonic Spree, fun.

facebook.com/benjaminsdunnmusic

BENJAMIN DUNN

Whether it was learning guitar at 12 years old or singing in his Catholic school choir, Benjamin Dunn knew early on that he was called to a life of music. Over the years, that calling has birthed a band – Benjamin Dunn and the Animal Orchestra – and a ministry – Joy Revolution. Dunn, along with his wife Stephanie, views the band and the ministry as two inseparable parts of the same mission, a cause which has taken them to play in some of the world's most forgotten places. Having played everywhere from garbage dump towns and leper colonies, the Dunns seem ready to share the joy of music and the love of God wherever there are ears to listen.

From the places you play, to your ministry offshoot, how would you say you differ from the typical touring band or professional musician? How would you say you are similar?

We differ in that we feel like we're more of a movement than a band. We have a message that comes out pretty strong in the things we do. We are similar in that we tour, make records and love getting people to yell lyrics to our songs (smiles).

How do you view your music in conjunction with your ministry, Joy Revolution? Are they one and

the same in your mind, or are there occasional lines of separation between the two?

It's all one thing for me, they are a part of each other.

When you play music at a leper colony or garbage dump community, what are the dynamics like? Set the scene for us. What is the typical process, atmosphere? What things do you do in those situations, and what kinds of responses do you get?

The typical scene is a village of slums and shacks, and we will go in and find people and start serenading them one by one. The response is always joy, it seems to be the universal language. We come in with love and songs and it never fails to win peoples' hearts.

Who are some artists who have inspired you in terms of the sound of your music, and what sources have you drawn most inspiration from in forming your ministry?

As far as my music I've been influenced by Peter Gabriel, The Police, Prince, Madonna, Cindi Lauper, The Jackson 5, The Cure and, really, too many artists to name. The biggest influences in my

ministry and theology have been Lewis, of course, Adam Clarke, Spurgeon and multiple translators of the Bible. We have a library of over 100 translations of the Bible in the English language in our house. We are sort of book nerds.

How is your wife Stephanie involved? What are her roles in music and ministry, and what unique things does she bring to the table that you couldn't do without?

Stephanie is the glue that holds the whole ship together. She tours and travels with me, helps manage and does lots of admin. Also she is a huge music critic, so she always lets me know, with black and white honesty, if a song is good or not. Besides that, she is an amazing artist and writer herself!

On your blog, you speak about "erasing the line between the secular and sacred..." Could you describe what you mean by that?

What I would like to see, is all of us valuing things differently. Instead of seeing darkness behind every bush, we start to see Jesus everywhere – inside the church or in secular life ... even in people. C.S. Lewis said true sainthood lies in seeing God in the small things.



Album: *Grace Alone*
Label: Mars Hill Music
Release Date: August 21, 2012
Members: Dustin Kensrue, vocals/guitar; Phil Neujahr, bass;
 Lee Neujahr, drums; Jonny Sandu, keyboards
RIYL: Thrice

marshall.com

THE MODERN POST

The Modern Post is a worship band from Mars Hill Church in Orange County, CA, led by Dustin Kensrue of Thrice. *Grace Alone* is the band's debut EP on the newly formed Mars Hill Music record label. *Grace Alone* has already hit two Billboard charts in its first week of being released, nailing a spot on the Top Heatseekers Albums chart and an impressive showing on the Top Christian Albums chart. Quite impressive for an album that's mainly comprised of rearranged hymns with one original song.

Kensrue, an Orange County native, moved his family to Bellevue, Washington to serve as deacon and worship leader after helping plant a Mars Hill church in Orange County a little over a year ago. "Basically, I got asked to come up here. They were looking for a guy to be the worship director at this church and also start out overseeing all the worship ministry across Mars Hill. I had a heart for that before, but I realized I really couldn't do it at this point from Orange County, because most of the churches were up here and to start this up I would need to be up here. I feel very strongly called to the ministry

that I'm in and to the worship culture and Christian culture at large."

The Thrice singer/guitarist had been looking around for musicians and ended up getting together with brothers Phil and Lee Neujahr, two guys who he had known for a long time. Keyboardist Jonny Sandu, who had never played in any kind of church setting before, blew Kensrue away at the audition and hence The Modern Post was formed.

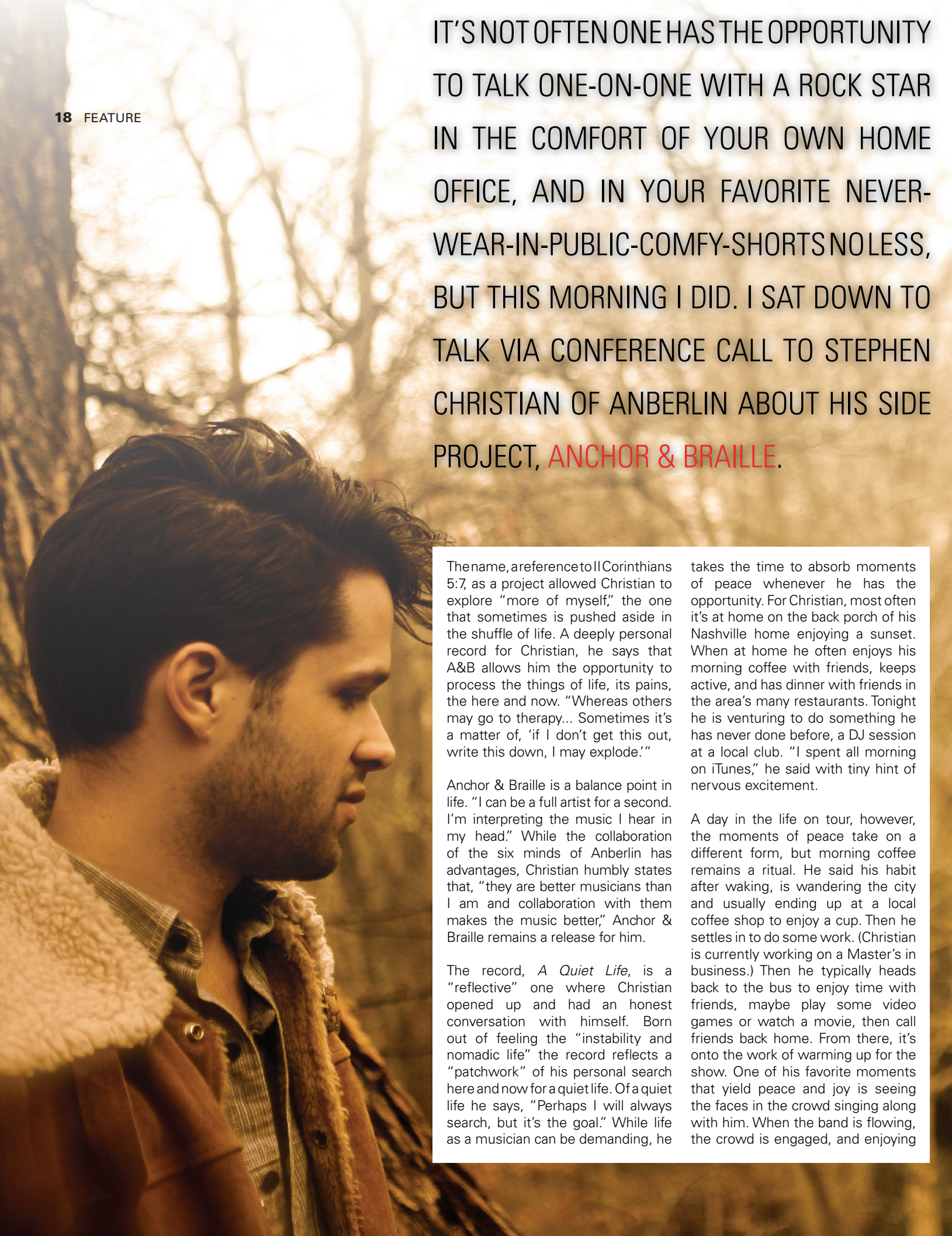
"It just developed," recalls Kensrue on the way he and his new bandmates gelled. "We did the version of 'Amazing Grace' that we arranged the first time we got together and it kind of set a tone and a space for each instrument, which I think influences the sound a lot. To me I'm always making music and I don't have huge walls between," he says, on how Thrice differs from his new project. "Maybe because Thrice is a bunch of different sounding things, anyway. I'm just kind of used to that."

"Just as I Am," a hymn written by Charlotte Elliott in 1835, was masterfully rearranged

by The Modern Post to be included on the EP. "It's one of my favorite hymns," Kensrue says, "just breaking down that there's nothing I can bring to the table and, if I'm trying to, I'm missing the point anyway. I need help. I need mercy."

"Grace Alone" is the first full and completed worship song I've written. I really like the song. It's structured essentially as a hybrid of a hymn and a pop song. The verses make it really easy to sing the first time you hear it. The whole song moves in a Trinitarian form. The first, second, and third sections are Father, Son, Holy Spirit. It's all about grace and what God's done for us and 'This is what I couldn't do. This is what God did for me.'"

"Apparently I told my wife that I would never be a worship leader," says Kensrue with a laugh. "I didn't even want to associate with it. God really changed my heart in that. I feel like God's telling me to do this, so I'm going to keep walking forward in this."



IT'S NOT OFTEN ONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ONE-ON-ONE WITH A ROCK STAR IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME OFFICE, AND IN YOUR FAVORITE NEVER-WEAR-IN-PUBLIC-COMFY-SHORTS NO LESS, BUT THIS MORNING I DID. I SAT DOWN TO TALK VIA CONFERENCE CALL TO STEPHEN CHRISTIAN OF ANBERLIN ABOUT HIS SIDE PROJECT, **ANCHOR & BRAILLE**.

The name, a reference to II Corinthians 5:7, as a project allowed Christian to explore "more of myself," the one that sometimes is pushed aside in the shuffle of life. A deeply personal record for Christian, he says that A&B allows him the opportunity to process the things of life, its pains, the here and now. "Whereas others may go to therapy... Sometimes it's a matter of, 'if I don't get this out, write this down, I may explode.'"

Anchor & Braille is a balance point in life. "I can be a full artist for a second. I'm interpreting the music I hear in my head." While the collaboration of the six minds of Anberlin has advantages, Christian humbly states that, "they are better musicians than I am and collaboration with them makes the music better," Anchor & Braille remains a release for him.

The record, *A Quiet Life*, is a "reflective" one where Christian opened up and had an honest conversation with himself. Born out of feeling the "instability and nomadic life" the record reflects a "patchwork" of his personal search here and now for a quiet life. Of a quiet life he says, "Perhaps I will always search, but it's the goal." While life as a musician can be demanding, he

takes the time to absorb moments of peace whenever he has the opportunity. For Christian, most often it's at home on the back porch of his Nashville home enjoying a sunset. When at home he often enjoys his morning coffee with friends, keeps active, and has dinner with friends in the area's many restaurants. Tonight he is venturing to do something he has never done before, a DJ session at a local club. "I spent all morning on iTunes," he said with tiny hint of nervous excitement.

A day in the life on tour, however, the moments of peace take on a different form, but morning coffee remains a ritual. He said his habit after waking, is wandering the city and usually ending up at a local coffee shop to enjoy a cup. Then he settles in to do some work. (Christian is currently working on a Master's in business.) Then he typically heads back to the bus to enjoy time with friends, maybe play some video games or watch a movie, then call friends back home. From there, it's onto the work of warming up for the show. One of his favorite moments that yield peace and joy is seeing the faces in the crowd singing along with him. When the band is flowing, the crowd is engaged, and enjoying



the music, he says, "It's a feeling hard to explain to others, but it's powerful." After a show, it's off to a late night dinner with friends, (Jimmy John's being a favorite), then seeing what the night brings.

When he travels, books, podcasts and experiences such as riding on a double-decker bus in England bring to mind music that he has been listening to or knows well ... and from that came "Find Me." Of traveling and writing he says, "It's about proximity to what's going on around me."

His favorite thing about being a musician? "Touring" he said without hesitation. "Traveling to new cities, countries, performing my art before new audiences, it's all incredible." The hardest part of being a musician for a living: touring. "The first week you're excited. Weeks two and three, you're getting into the flow and the show gets better. Weeks four through seven, you're brain begins to wander, like you're repeating the same day over and over. You find you sleep a little more, get lazier, let projects slide. Missing time at home with family and friends, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, things we often take for granted is hard. Touring also makes it difficult to plan for the future. You have no idea where you may be."

When I asked about what he wants to be doing musically in 10 years, he said, "nothing. Maybe I will have started a family. Maybe I will continue to make Anchor & Braille records and tour every few years, but another passion of mine is to do some non-profit work." I asked what he felt was his weakness, musically and/or personally. I was met with another honest answer. Of music he said, "I want to be a better guitarist. I feel I have plateaued. "Personally," he said, "I want to be more self-disciplined, to be a better man of character." Not what one expects to hear from the frontman of a world touring band.

What do you want your fans to know about you that maybe they don't? "That I have a beautiful wife named Julia and that she sings on the new record, too." Of fans he says, "We have the most loyal, from the beginning of it all fans that any band could ever have. It's amazing." Music that he is listening to these days: Washed Out, the UK's Bombay Bicycle Club, The National, and Yea Sayer to name a few.

A *Quiet Life* reflects well the mind of man in search of the things that matter most: moments.

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BY SARAH ROBERTS

A close-up portrait of Tommy Walter, a man with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing dark sunglasses and a black zip-up jacket. He is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with wooden decking.

ABANDONED POOLS' NEW RECORD, *SUBLIME CURRENCY*, IS THE CULMINATION OF AN 11-YEAR PROCESS FOR TOMMY WALTER. AS BASSIST AND FOUNDING MEMBER OF EELS, WALTER LEFT THE GROUP TO PURSUE HIS OWN CREATIVE VISION. AFTER RELEASING SOPHOMORE EFFORT *ARMED TO THE TEETH* IN 2005, WALTER SHELVED THE PROJECT TO PURSUE WORK IN STUDIO PRODUCTION, COMMERCIAL MUSIC AND COMPOSING FOR TELEVISION. AFTER A SEVEN-YEAR HIATUS, ABANDONED POOLS IS BACK WITH A NEW LABEL HOME (TOOTH & NAIL) AND A NEW RECORD. WALTER RETURNED TO HIS ORIGINAL PROCESS OF WRITING AND PRODUCING MUCH OF THE ALBUM HIMSELF, AND PLAYED ALL THE INSTRUMENTS HIMSELF ASIDE FROM THE DRUM WORK. FANS OF RECENT TOOTH & NAIL ACTS LIKE MAE, COPELAND AND ANBERLIN WILL FIND MUCH TO LIKE, WHILE LONGTIME FOLLOWERS WILL ENJOY THE RETURN OF WALTER'S UNIQUE VOICE AND CREATIVE VISION. WE TOOK SOME TIME TO CATCH UP WITH WALTER AND TALK ABOUT HIS MANY MUSICAL PURSUITS, HIS CREATIVE PROCESS, THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN HIS LIFE, AND OF COURSE, THE LONG-AWAITED RETURN OF ABANDONED POOLS.

How did you get started in music, and when did you know you wanted to pursue it as a career?

I was fortunate that the public schools I grew up in had strong music programs. My brain has always been wired for music, so I was naturally drawn to it. I'm not the type that picked up a guitar to meet girls. I was drawn to it emotionally and intellectually. All the hype around it just confused me. I didn't think of it as a career, I just wanted to study it. I listened to a lot of movie soundtracks as a kid and the initial plan was to just score films. Along the way, I met some other like-minded people and started playing in rock bands. Then I joined the Eels and things just built from there.

What inspired you to start making new Abandoned Pools music again?

I needed some time off after the second album, *Armed to the Teeth*, and the disappointing experience I had with Universal Records. I started a couple side projects, worked with other artists, and did some TV music. The side projects didn't pan out, luckily, and I was anxious to be back at the helm of AP. I had been writing for AP over the years and just felt like it was time. My wife and my manager were both very supportive and that helped a lot.

What has working as a producer for other artists in between albums given you that you bring to your personal creative process?

It helped develop my instincts. I don't struggle as much coming up with ideas, and I think that's due to my experience of having to deliver in a timely manner for other people. I'm used to the pressure, and I enjoy it. You're always on a deadline, so you can't over-think things too much. I tend to over-think AP, but I'm trying to get better about that.

You write, produce and play most of the instruments on this album. What benefits and challenges come with working that way?

The challenge can be loss of perspective, since I'm isolated and don't have other people

around to give immediate feedback. I start to lose the big picture and my confidence wains, but a few days off usually takes care of that. The benefit is that I can be more focused and not worry about who's happy and who's not. There are fewer extra-musical influences and that helps keep my vision more coherent.

You were involved in composing for commercials and even an MTV show. Describe the unique creative challenges that type of work presented, and is there anything from that experience you bring into your current record?

For one, the motivation for writing is completely different. You're trying to please the client and do what's right for the job rather than writing for yourself and the fans. I've picked up some good production ideas from things I've tried in commercials. You're constantly trying something new, writing in a different style, so you come up with ideas you normally wouldn't in regular songwriting. It's a two-way street; some of the commercial spots I've done have elements of AP in them if it's appropriate. Other times, like the MTV show *Clone High* for example, I just do what I do and it works out.

You've said that these songs come from a more settled and joyful place than your past albums. Describe the changes you've gone through in the past few years, and how that is reflected in your art.

Getting married has been a great thing for me. My life was pretty scattered before. I was a little lost and now I'm much more grounded. Going through the struggles I did led me to where I am now, so I feel good about that. I think that helped a lot with this album, because I was less worried about a certain direction or approach; it just happened naturally.

The influence of social media has grown exponentially since your last album. How have you approached that new form of communication?

There is now direct access to fans and I think it's important to stay engaged. Not only is it expected, but it's helpful too. It's good to know

they're still out there and that's one of the main reasons I brought back AP. I kept getting messages asking when I was coming back. Having that kind of support is really important; and without it, I would have no idea there were still fans who wanted a new album. It let me know I wasn't doing this in a vacuum.

In the constantly changing music world, seven years can feel like a long time. How much were you concerned with incorporating new sounds and genres you've been exposed to since 2005? Was sounding "current" or different something you thought about, or was there a specific sound you were aiming for?

I think the music industry is in a slump right now, so I didn't feel like I needed to be part of a specific scene or movement. I've never felt that way, anyway. I have my own thing that I've developed over the years, so I just do that, for better or worse. Some songs were written several years ago and probably would have been different if they were finished when they were first written, but that's more about my own development as a writer and producer, not what's going on around me. Still, sometimes I'll hear something that will inspire me and I'll try to do my own version of it.

What are your plans for Abandoned Pools in future? Do you plan to tour and record regularly, or wait until the need for an outlet arises again?

I'll tour, but it has to be the right tour. I don't want to tour just for the sake of it. I've done that a lot and it can be expensive and tiring... But regardless, I expect to continue making albums consistently from here on out. In fact, I'm currently working on new material even before *Sublime Currency* is released.

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FRESH FROM A EUROPE TOUR, AND WITH A NEW ALBUM ON THE RISE, I TALK WITH THE CHARIOT'S FRONTMAN JOSH SCOGIN. DISCUSSING THE NEW ALBUM, *ONE WING*, THE EVER-CHANGING INDUSTRY AND THE RANDOMNESS THAT IS THE CHARIOT.

THE CHARIOT 23

"For a lack of better words, it has been referred to as just a beast. It is not a lizard or any other creature." Referring to the new cover art for the album. "There is no right or wrong for it, it's not like a creature we have words for. The guy who painted it refers to it as this beast that kind of rolls around. He kind of refers to that as our presence, like the presence of The Chariot in general. There is all these hands coming out and hands going in. Sort of the difference of us sort of reaching out, and people helping us out. It is very unique and abstract, which I like. It is one of the things that drew me to art in the first place. People can take what they want from it. It is all part of a puzzle. Owning the CD will be part of it, owning the vinyl will be a part and the 7-inch we plan on putting out. All of these are part of the puzzle. Once you pull the sleeves out or unfold it, you can see the full picture."

"Our shows are completely impulsive and spontaneous. Which is funny, because our friend that painted the painting, he said that is how he goes about painting. We will practice before we go on tour, we will try and come up with a set we like. Every show is different, though. We might just switch up the set, we might add songs, take away songs, or flip-flop songs. There is no way for us to get complacent. I feel like we try to stay on our toes and to keep everything fresh. We feel it will eventually trickle out to the audience and make it more of our own show for that night. Good or bad, everyone that was there got to experience it. Once it becomes a routine, and more cookie-cutter where it is the same jokes, same set, today's show is the same as yesterday's show and tomorrow's show. It gets to where you are just faking it. It gets easy to just play the role you are supposed to play. That is something that we do not ever want to do."

"There are more bands out there than what people want to know, where if you hit the

space bar on the computer, their whole live show is stopped. That is a shame. We are a tiny band and we belong in the underground world. That idea should have never trickled into any band that I know. That being said, The Chariot does not have a problem playing with any band. We are not claiming what we are doing is right and they are wrong, no one knows. The end of the day for people who don't know? Those bands will *sound* better. If they need four guitarists they got it. If they need the vocalists to be pitch-perfect, he will hit it. Being a punk rock kid, it is a bummer that it has trickled into my world. With live shows there should be some danger there, some element of watching this in real life and the possibility of them screwing up. That is why I went to see them live and not just sit in a car, why we watch *Saturday Night Live*, why we love live programming. They may mess up, and when you take that element of danger out, I don't understand why you don't just go watch a music video or listen to them on CD. At the end of the day we don't care and we will play with anyone."

Curious about Josh's comments regarding live music and the industry, I wanted to press further about the social media and see what he thought about that.

"It's cool for a band like us. Our band exists to hang out with people. I can understand the frustration that comes from some of the older bands. When they signed up to be in a band. They didn't necessarily sign up to know the Twitter world and to share their every step to the whole wide world. I can understand the frustration that comes with that, but that is where we are at now. Bands pride themselves at being mysterious. I remember growing up and watching bands, you always assumed they are out back sacrificing a goat, when they are probably actually playing with their kids. I think a lot of bands can find themselves frustrated with that. You sign up to play music and shows,

not to tell everyone everything you do all day. When you go to do tours, you don't look at album sells anymore. You do, but you look at how they have a million followers on their Twitter. It has become part of the world. For me, and for The Chariot, it is awesome, because it is a way for anyone to connect with us. Back in the day before the Myspaces, the Twitters, the Facebooks and all that stuff, if you wanted to get in touch with your favorite band you just couldn't. To me that sort of connection I think is awesome. If it wasn't for the Internet and the social medias to be able to get the word out ... it's not like back when MTV played music videos. They wouldn't play us. Your fate was in the hands of the record labels, because you had no way of getting the word out for new albums and stuff. Obviously, bands have been doing it for years, so I'm not saying it's impossible. But it is now more in the hands of the kids and more in the audienc(e)s hands. If they want to follow me on Twitter, they can and they will know our new album is coming out. Instead of the radio and MTV calling the shots, the audience themselves is calling the shots. They get to know what they want to know. I like that system. It's more for the people by the people, and I think our band is where it's at because of it. I definitely can see the benefit of it. There is definitely some drawbacks, though. You say something in a 164-word text or whatever, and you're just goofing off, because you know a guy in another band will see it and laugh. But someone else takes it the wrong way, and you didn't even think of it like that, and then all of a sudden you got people writing real serious stuff and you can even go back in those 164 words to explain or to apologize. So there is definitely times when you can shoot yourself in the foot. So just don't take everything too seriously."

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BY TONY D. BRYANT



SO THE MIGHTY AS I LAY DYING IS SET TO RELEASE THEIR 6TH ALBUM, AWAKENED, ON SEPTEMBER 25.

More than almost any other band, AILD is revered among Christian metalheads. The story of the band is one of steady, consistent production born from an untiring work ethic. This steady, consistent production has endeared them to their legion of fans, because they have given those fans what they want: album after album that sounds like As I Lay Dying-style metal.

Since the beginning of this impressive run, two particular men have worked together to make it all happen. Those two men are Tim Lambesis (vocals) and Jordan Mancino (drums). So I hopped on the phone with Jordan to get the low-down on this new set of tunes.

"*Awakened* has a really gritty production style that we haven't had before. It's without a doubt the favorite AILD album of every member of this band," says Jordan.

One of my aims in our conversation is to explore the dynamic between Tim and Jordan. You see, the two have been playing together for quite a while now. They know how to write together. They know how to put on a show together. What they've accomplished together is no small feat: they've simultaneously built a massive fanbase and commercial success, while maintaining an openly Christian stance in all public relations. Having been at the top of the heavy metal scene for several years now, AILD understands that few bands realize this level of success for this long. Fewer bands do so while continually asserting their Christian faith in their lyrics as well as their interviews.

Tim and Jordan lead quite different lives away from their roles in As I Lay Dying. For instance, aside from AILD, Tim is a very busy man. He produces albums by other bands. He does Austrian Death Machine. He gets tattoos. He seemingly blossoms muscles overnight.

Jordan, on the other hand, enjoys playing golf in his off time and relaxing on the links. In fact, Jordan is preparing for 9 holes of golf as we chat. I promised not to keep him from his Tiger Woods impersonation for too long.

Jordan reveals to me that, personal itineraries aside, the band found time to write and record

11 songs for *Awakened*. These songs represent their first album where every band member loves every song on the album. But it wasn't easy. They recorded *Awakened* in only three weeks due to the narrow window of time left between two big tours. The band sought out Bill Stevenson to produce the album and the vibe Bill brought to the production was something the band feels is new to their sound: a more aggressive, almost punk-rock feel.

This should come as no surprise, considering Bill used to be the drummer for The Descendants and has been recording bands such as NOFX for years. His perspective on what AILD could sound like was an energizing factor to the band and gave each member a sense that they were recording in a way they'd never explored before.

Says Jordan, "We all wanted a gritty, natural production, which is something we hadn't had before. We had a lot shorter production time for *Awakened* than we normally do. Having three weeks when you normally have two months makes you operate differently in the studio. Because of this, the drums have more feel to the takes and they have a more push/pull sort of feel to them. Bill brought a level of intensity to the production of this record that was new to an As I Lay Dying album."

I can't say I disagree. But even outside of production aspects, *Awakened* is brutal. It's got heavy riffs. It's got breakdowns. It even has a guitar instrumental. Cool beans.

But you know, what did you expect? I honestly can't reveal anything shocking about this album, because there isn't anything shocking about it: it is an expectedly solid piece of American metal, as are all the albums these guys put out.

At this point, most fans know what to expect from a new AILD album. The band has a well-worn path to follow that they've blazed for themselves. The production has gotten better and better with each successive album. But as for the riffs and songs themselves, there are no curveballs here. For some people, that's great. It all depends on what you want from a record. Chances are, if you're a fan of AILD, then you know what to expect. *Awakened* will deliver what you expected, so it'll be no letdown in any way.

Aside from their ability to release album after album of solid metal tunes, the band also seems to have a nearly superhuman ability to keep their heads down and work without drawing personal attention or drama to themselves. They naturally avoid controversy like the plague. The only drama I could recall about the band was a rumor that turned out (obviously) to be untrue. So of course, I felt it incumbent upon me to summon the spirit of Chris Farley and ask Jordan about this rumor.

"So, do you remember when there was a rumor a few years ago that you died while on tour?" I asked.

"Really?"

"Yeah. That wasn't true, was it?"

"Ha ha, no, apparently not."

"...Awesome!"

Our conversation wraps up and I let Jordan get to his golf swing. He proves to be a delightful interviewee and enjoyable conversation partner.

To be completely upfront with you, I'm not a gigantic fan of As I Lay Dying. Their music has just never clicked with me. Maybe I'm jealous of their success. Maybe I'm jealous of Tim's muscles. Regardless, I can appreciate hard-working dudes who consistently write solid riffs and develop those riffs into songs that flow well. The fact that I'm not a fanboy should actually make my compliments more meaningful, right?

Now, enjoy another assault on your hearing ability and let *Awakened* pummel you for awhile. If you anticipated this release, your anticipation will be rewarded and your expectations will be met. Can you ask for more?

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IN TODAY'S METAL SCENE THERE ARE FEW THINGS MORE EXCITING THAN WHEN A BAND JUST NAILS IT SQUARE ON THE HEAD. BUT THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT BECOMING THE ARCHETYPE HAVE DONE WITH THEIR LATEST, AND IN MY OPINION GREATEST, ALBUM, / AM (SOLID STATE). THIS TIME AROUND THEY'VE DROPPED MOST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL INSTRUMENTATION FOUND ON PREVIOUS RELEASES IN FAVOR OF COMPLEX AND BONE CRUSHING RIFFS.

The band's guitar player Seth Hecox and also new vocalist Chris McCane explain this latest shift in the band's ever-evolving sound. Seth: "As we wrote the album, we felt we had plenty of great riffs and, after working those into songs, we sat back and listened and realized those riffs and songs were fantastic on their own and we didn't want anything to distract from the sheer intensity of those riffs. BTA's career has been an exhilarating and sometimes strange journey. We've been blessed with fans who are willing to take this journey with us. That's allowed us to follow our muse, so to speak, and create what seems to flow through us naturally. With *Celestial Completion*, there had been a streak of creativity in me that got to speak its mind, because it all just sort of worked out to have sitar and horns and everything else on the album. This time, we felt more focused on our riffs and didn't feel any need to add in any crazy instrumentation or super-experimental sounds. Daniel wrote the majority of the music for */AM* and I couldn't be happier with his creations."

Chris: "We really just wanted to make the heaviest album we could. It was nothing like saying, 'Hey, let's change our sound' or anything of that nature, it was simply an

attempt to make music that blows your mind from the very start!"

And that's just what they have done, even blowing their own minds at times as Seth describes "The Time Bender."

"Daniel wrote that and it was one of the first riffs he recorded and showed to us at practice. Initially, I couldn't wrap my mind around it and I thought, 'Man, I'm gonna have to really get with it to understand these incredible riffs Daniel is coming up with.' (laughs) I guess I was the old guy having to break out of my ruts and expand my mind to understand what was happening in these fantastic riffs. It was all a result of that song being titled 'The Time Bender.' We had some of our titles before the songs were written and we formatted the lyrics and sometimes the music to fit those concepts. Doesn't that riff (intro of the song starting around :25) sound like an audible match to the concept of bending time?"

Lyrically, */AM* is just as intense as the riffs that drive this record, detailing a story told in first person. "This is the first BTA album

I've (Seth) written lyrics on and I was happy with how everything worked out. The overall concept for the album is that */AM* is a collection of stories all told in first person. Those stories are highly metaphorical, even mythological, methods of Jesus Christ explaining Himself and His work. Just as Aslan reveals aspects of Jesus because he's an allegorical character, so these stories seek to highlight truths about Christ by hiding the truths in an allegory. Then the final song is an unveiling: 'I and My Father are one: I AM that I AM.'"

You can't help but notice that there are several new faces in *Becoming The Archetype*. Drastic changes in line-up can often times weaken a band by destroying its chemistry and losing its focus. After what they describe as an "inter-band shakeup," BTA appears not only more focused, but hungrier and even more energized.

Seth: "It wasn't easy, I'll tell you that. I struggled with different options for a while and sought out godly counsel. After

BY JEF CUNNINGHAM



quite a bit of mental and emotional anguish, it seemed clear that if BTA was a ministry, then there's no reason that the ministry shouldn't continue despite some members leaving. If a group of missionaries goes overseas, does everyone quit when one key member goes back home? Absolutely not. So Daniel and I looked at lots of different options and settled on a set of 3 great guys who are fun, insanely talented and have a passion for Christ and ministry through music. Now we're in a position to move forward in confidence and excitement!"

"Why not just rebrand yourselves as a different band?"

Seth: "Well, we do have one original member. That's more than some other bands can say, (laughs). Is The Chariot supposed to change their name because Josh Scoggin is the only original member? I feel completely at ease with continuing under the BTA banner, as this is also Daniel's second album (making him a member on as many albums

as Jon Star and more than Alex Kenis). I've written roughly half of the volume of music in BTA's career, so I see no issue whatsoever with a continuation of what we've been doing for years, especially when the mission and format remain the same: proclaim the glory of the Gospel with boldness in a music that is created with excellence in mind and purpose in everything we do."

With *I AM*, BecomingThe Archetype seems to have a new sense of confidence and a youthful energy. Both Seth and Chris describe it like this. Seth: "We do see ourselves as confident people and we draw that confidence from several different sources. We all know that we are loved and cherished by our Creator and our Savior. We also know who we are as a band and that identity shines through in these songs. There was a period of flux when we considered different options in our lineup and sound. But those issues resolved themselves relatively quickly and now we're able to focus on the task at hand, having put those worries and concerns behind us. You could view BTA as a brand new band on the scene with a brand new, exciting sound that just happens to have experience in songwriting

and maturity of paying their dues. Isn't that the best of both worlds?" (laughs)

Chris: "We are all very confident in this new record, because this is an extremely heavy record with very memorable lyrics and vocal patterns. This album will keep our old fans with its crushing songs, yet we all believe we'll also be able to reach some crowds we may not have hit yet."

Right now BTA is in a very interesting place. In one hand they have an established name with experience, and in the other they have excitement and hunger that comes from the fresh blood that's been infused from its new members. "We have the energy of a young and hungry band and that entails a lot of excitement. But we also have the maturity and experience of a veteran band that's paid its dues. I love where we're at right now and I think the album is a reflection of that new intensity and fire within BTA."

People are gonna really love this." Seth adds.



tourniquet

SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT AGE. SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT THE STATE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY – AND METAL IN PARTICULAR. SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND THE ABILITY OF THE “AVERAGE JOE MUSICIAN” TO MAKE AN ALBUM IN HIS LIVING ROOM AND SELLING IT ON ITUNES. FOR THE METAL BAND KNOWN AS **TOURNIQUET**, ALL OF THESE FACTORS CONVERGED TO AFFORD THEM THE ABILITY TO MAKE AND RELEASE *ANTISEPTIC BLOODBATH* – THEIR EIGHTH STUDIO ALBUM AND FIRST IN NINE YEARS. GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE THAT WAIT AND BOTH THE BAND AND ITS FANS ARE NOW REWARDED WITH A HIGH QUALITY ALBUM.

So, it has been nine years since the last studio album.

What have you all been up to?

Ted: Well, that was the last release on Metal Blade, and it kind of became a big mess. They did a great job, but part of the issue was the fact that we had such a large fan base in the Christian market and for Metal Blade to get on board with a Christian distribution plan became a frustration for them. Moving product for us without Christian distribution just wasn't adequate, so overall it wasn't working out, and we just called it a day. I do have to give them a 10+ on every level though – honesty, integrity and everything, they are really great to deal with.

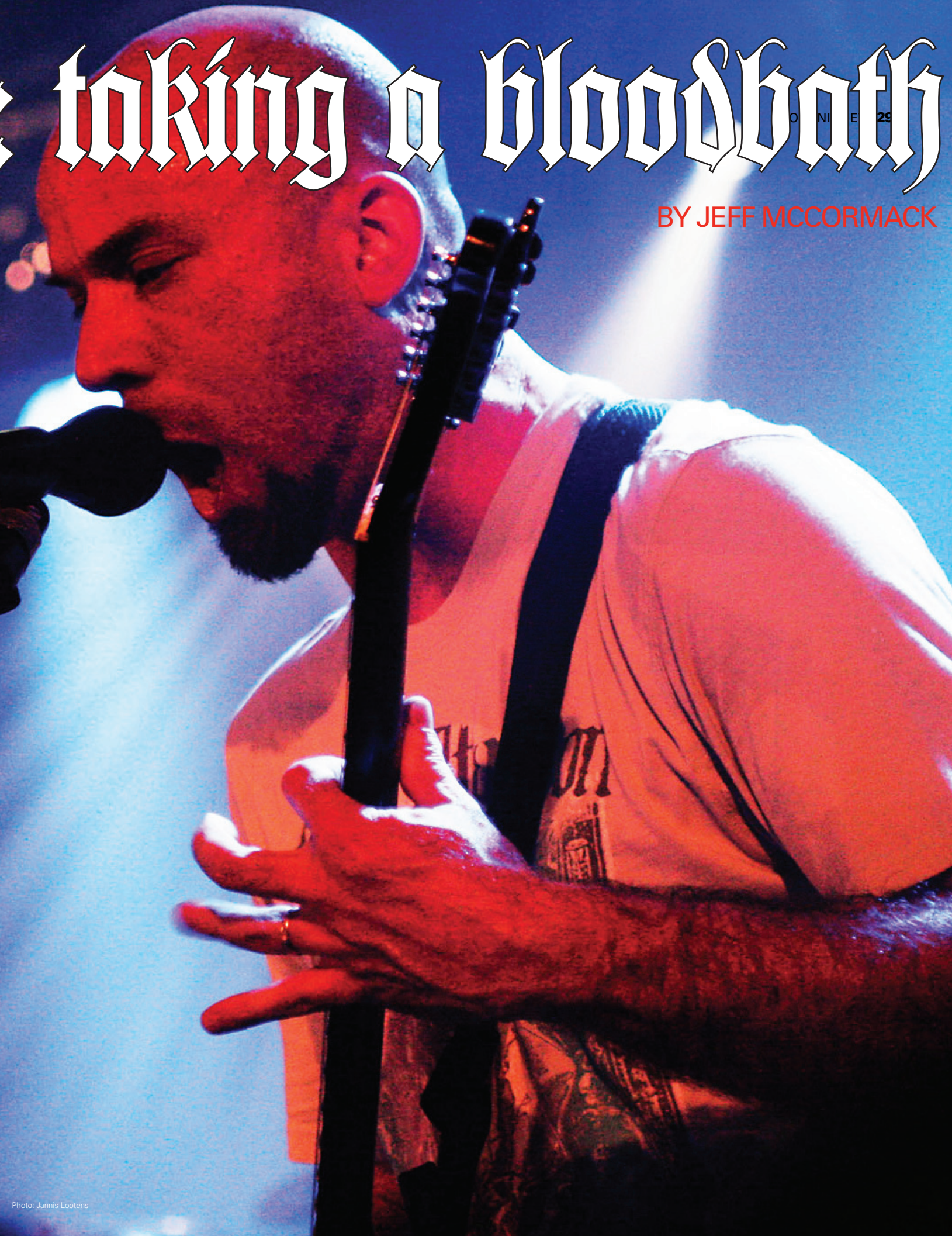
Of course I have released a few solos albums in the past couple years (*Ode to a Roadkill*, *In the Shadow of the Masters*, and *Ancient Christmas*).

Luke: We spent some time looking for a label before deciding to go indie and go through the Kickstarter program, which worked well for us. We have not been idle by any means.

Aaron: We've played some show since then, but you slow down and see changes in the industry, and next thing you know the years have gone by. (laughs)

Ted, speaking of the solo albums, how have those gone over? Specifically *Ode to a Roadkill*, being it was so out-there different?

Ted: When it comes to fans of stoner bands (which is a music style, not a drugged-out state of mind), bands like Electric Wizard, Sleep, Sunn O, Sons of Otis, etc., that I have ever heard of, my album is the only Christian offering into the true stoner style. At first, some were shocked by it, thinking “we’ve waiting eight years for this?” But it was a solo project, not Tourniquet. I just love that sound and probably always will. There are quite a few people, like my friend Bruce Franklin (Trouble), who hear it and immediately just get it. So, it has increased in sales, even recently, so I think people understand more of what it is now. It turned out how I wanted, and I am pleased with it. All three of the releases have been received very well actually.



taking a bloodbath

BY JEFF MCCORMACK



“THE PASSION AND EXCITEMENT IS NOT DIMINISHING. I’M ANXIOUS TO PLAY AND GET OUT THERE.”

I know it is early, but how has the new album, *Antiseptic Bloodbath*, been received so far?

Ted: The response to the new album has been beyond anything we have ever had to our albums. It has been simply an incredible response, and it was on most online sources about a month before it was physically out. All of the responses we have heard so far, and this includes from those who supported it through the Kickstarter program, have been great and positive.

Aaron: Definitely, we all kind felt there was something special about this release, but we’re still overwhelmed by the response of how much people appreciate and dig it.

So, has the album taken the past nine years to record little by little due to the distance between the members (Ted is in Wisconsin, Luke and Aaron are in California), or is it a more recent thing?

Ted: I always have melodies and song ideas floating around in my head, so most of this album has been there for a few years now, I just had to knock it out of my head and get it recorded. So it was about two years ago that I had most of the music written, and Aaron and Luke have two songs they were working on, too. There is a lot of material left over for next time, as well.

It has been 22 years from the first album until now. What would you all consider the major highlight(s)/memory/accomplishments that stand out?

Ted: Wow, that is a tough one. For me, I think the most exciting thing is the fan base loyalty that would have to be number one. Over the years just seeing the excitement there and now seeing the parents getting the kids into it – posting photos of them and their kids in Tourniquet shirts or whatever. Also, the fact that people understand that we do things a little differently – like having songs about animal welfare and different things not usually heard of or on other Christian albums. So many of the fans get it at this point – where in the beginning we had to justify it more often. There is so much more awareness now, and so many fans get it.

Luke: Highlights for me would include a lot of things – my first Tourniquet show, my first record, my audition, meeting Steve Taylor for the first time, watching Vinnie Paul tear apart a pool table at a club we played in Dallas – just a ton of great memories. The biggest thing to me is just still being relevant and the great fans. We’ve been very, very blessed to get to make music that

we like and there is still a market for it – that stands out the most to me.

Aaron: For me, being able to play different countries I have never been to, especially playing Flevo was great and a great crowd response. And the fans are so great – to be able to be at home, as a normal person, and then go out on the road and meet people that appreciate what you’ve done artistically – it is just mind-blowing to be known and appreciated.

You’ve posted special explanations about the new cover artwork. Has there been any negative feedback?

Ted: Well, it is connected to something in my life that is very important, and that is the treatment of animals. Not just the cute little dogs and cats, but any kind. I have connected with other animals, and know that they experience the same things as a dog or cat would. To me, hands down, the most neglected aspect of the Christian life (applied theology) is how we interact and treat God’s creation. And it is equally important – the aspect of Christ on the cross. People ask why the bones are visible, and that shouldn’t be misconstrued as being a rotting Christ. It’s a depiction of the brutality endured by Jesus with a certain amount of license allowed for artistic expression.

Aaron: I think it is a great bold statement, and I can understand some people being taken back or confused by it, and I can understand that – as long as they don’t judge it for what it isn’t. It symbolizes visually what the song *Antiseptic Bloodbath* is about, and kind of symbolizes the whole notion of what we must consider – what Jesus did for us. We can’t forget the price He paid, as well as the way we treat animals. It gets people to talk and discuss things, so I think it is great.

Twenty-two years, eight full length studio albums, and various other EPs, live and compilations later – what has been the most popular, or highest selling release so far?

Ted: I would have to say highest sales is probably *Vanishing Lessons* – or actually maybe it is *Crawl to China*.

Really? While *Crawl* is still one of my favorite releases, it stands out as so different than all the other releases, that it kind of surprises me it would be as popular.

Ted: Yes, it is probably the most different, I agree. But you’d be surprised at the amount of rabid fans of that release. And, of course, there are those on the other side, too. I think now, with things like YouTube and all of the online stuff, it has become

“TO ME, HANDS DOWN, THE MOST NEGLECTED ASPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (APPLIED THEOLOGY) IS HOW WE INTERACT AND TREAT GOD’S CREATION.”

more popular than when it first came out. Right before that we had released the *Carry the Wounded* EP, which was so soft, and followed it with the *The Collected Works* compilation with the two new heavy songs. So, after the two heavy songs, people expected the next album to be similar, but *Crawl to China* was different and that caught a lot of people off guard. It had better sales, though, because it was the only release on Benson records, and it had great distribution.

Luke: It is very eclectic. We did things differently, like tweaking the guitar tone for every song. We’ve been fortunate in our career, doing a lot of different styles, though always maintained a degree of heaviness, technicality and common themes throughout, yet none of them really sound the same if you play them all back to back, but you can tell it is us. We’ve taken these calculated risks and have been fortunate that people dig it.

What kind of bands do you personally currently listen to these days?

Ted: I still listen to a lot of ‘70s stuff, like Robin Trower, Pat Travers, who is on our new album, and stuff like that. I hear new stuff, and I like and appreciate some of it, but not to the point of running out and buying it. There are so many styles of music that I like, from Dixieland to stoner rock, classical to classic rock, metal to grindcore.

Luke: A lot of Butch Walker, Bon Jovi, and I am not ashamed, but kind of embarrassed to admit that I think “Call Me Maybe” is one of the best pop songs I have heard in the last year. Bands like Boston, Stryper, Cheap Trick, just anything I feel like listening to at the time. As for newer bands, I think Lzzy Hale (Halestorm) has one of the best voices I have heard in probably the last ten years in terms of hard rock.

Aaron: I tend to stick with the stuff I have always listened to – Led Zeppelin, old ZZ Top, but it reaches out to stuff like Megadeth, as well as bands like The Melvins, Jimi Hendrix, and so many others.

What is in the near future of Tourniquet? Will it be another nine years before we get another album?

Ted: No, no, no. We’re ready to do some more shows, and get out there and more active again.

Aaron: We want to definitely play more shows – the passion

and excitement is not diminishing, I’m anxious to play and get out there.

Luke: The last show we played was in 2009, so we have not been inactive over the last nine years. But in terms of the album, I hope it will raise our profile further, and that maybe some of the fans of the guests who played on it – Karl Sanders (Nile), Marty Friedman (formerly of Megadeth), Pat Travers, Bruce Franklin (Trouble) may lock in and check us out. We hope to stay the course and reach new people along the way.

Any final thoughts?

Ted: I want to mention our producer Neil Kernon, who we had never worked with before, but he is a very well-known producer. He got us a fantastic-sounding album, and the production on this album is hands-down the best production and best sounding album we’ve ever had.

Luke: We do not take it for granted that our fan base has displayed the loyalty they have, which gives us the longevity we have. I don’t understand when people do not want to be around the people who give them the ability to do what they love to do. So we are grateful, and want to thank our community of people that make it all happen.

Aaron: I want to thank all the great fans, too. It is awesome to put another album out after so long. We are definitely not done recording or playing live, and hopefully this will be the beginning of a new chapter for the band.

Well, due to space limitations this is all we have for you. The conversations continued and contained discussions on everything from more animal treatment issues, organic food, faith and ministry thoughts, and many more rabbit trails that we went down. One thing seemed for sure with them all – they are excited and ready to be more active after being somewhat absent for the past few years.

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BLUE LIKE JAZZ | STEVE TAYLOR

AN INTERVIEW BY MIKE KAPLY

When Steve Taylor and Ben Pierson decided to turn Don Miller's book, *Blue Like Jazz*, into a movie, they had no idea how much blood, sweat and tears it would require. After years of work getting the writing done and getting the funding together, an investor dropped out and the movie looked like it wasn't going to be made. But two fans, Zach Prichard and Jonathan Frazier, stepped in and helped make it happen using Kickstarter. When *Blue Like Jazz* got funded, it was (and still is) Kickstarter's largest film project. I got to spend some time talking with director Steve Taylor about his experience with the movie and some musical projects he's been working on.

Q: How did you personally find the book *Blue Like Jazz*?

A friend gave it to me – Jim Chaffee – who has since become Don [Miller]'s kind of agent/manager. Jim and I have known each other for a really long time and he suggested I should read the book.

Q: So then what made you want to turn it into a movie?

Man, you know it's not a book that you put down and think, "I've got this movie in my head, I can't wait to see it." But I'm telling you, as soon as I put the book down, I wanted this to be my next project. I was looking for what to do next anyway, so I was kind of already attuned to that. It was a combination of really thinking the confession booth would make a great ending to a movie and the notion of a guy who grows up in a very conservative environment and ends up going to college in the opposite place appealed to me, because I had lived an experience similar to that when I went to Colorado University in Boulder and so I felt this was a story I could tell well. I felt like I intuitively got that story.

Q: How did you then meet Don Miller?

Don was in Nashville a month later to do a reading of *Blue Like Jazz* at the Belcourt Theatre, which is kind of like the arthouse theater in town, and they occasionally host live events, which was interesting because the Belcourt ended up being our main place where we did test screenings five or six years later when we finally got the movie made. At that point the book was not a bestseller. People were starting to talk about (it), but it was kind of at the beginning stage. I think it might have been out for a year, but it was more sort of a book that was just being passed around and we had a mutual friend that had sponsored the reading and I asked him if I could meet Don afterwards and so he set it up. This guy, Al Andrews... I think Don had some prior knowledge of me from my music so that probably helped smooth the introduction and I just pitched him on the idea of turning *Blue Like Jazz* into a movie. I think he'd been approached before and had felt like, for whatever reason, it didn't make sense. The main things I pitched him

on were, "I think we should end the movie with the confession booth, but I think to make it a movie story it would be better if your character was a nineteen-year-old college student who lived the experience because in the book, Don is a writer in his late 20s, early 30s who moves to Portland and lives off campus at Reed College and ends up auditing classes and kind of observing life there. I just thought it would be more of a movie story if it was told from the perspective of a college student who was attending there. He's a good storyteller and I think he kind of intuitively got that it would be a better approach. He wanted to think about it and the last movie I did, *The Second Chance*, was actually opening that weekend, so he saw it in Portland that weekend and then called me back on Monday and said, "This sounds good" and asked if he could join in the writing process. Typically that's not a good idea (understandably), because the author is very close to their book and you have to make a lot of painful changes when you translate stories from one medium to the other. *Blue Like Jazz* the book is a collection of essays, some of them almost stream of consciousness and a movie has to have dramatic structure. It's not about people sitting around in a coffee shop or a bar talking. It's about what happens. So I told Don my reservations, but I said, "If you're really serious about this, why don't you go to this screenwriting seminar. It's a real intense three-day workshop that takes place twice a year in LA and twice a year in New York led by probably the most famous screenwriting teacher around, this guy Robert McKee." He went, loved the weekend and came back with at least kind of the basics of a vocabulary of screenwriting and then he and Ben Pierson – who is a long time collaborator – and I, the three of us went to work to turn it into a screenplay.

Q: Obviously Don was able to capture his time doing that in his book *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*. What are your recollections of the process of making the book into a screenplay?

Number one, I loved *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, because he's really good at describing things. Most of my recollections are just that we had a blast. We would sit around pitching ideas and there were times when we would have disagreements and sometimes very strong disagreements, but most of the time it just seemed like we were laughing a lot. Some of my favorite times were ... I would tend to be the guy who would take all the information away and then work it up into kind of more of the screenplay format, but there were times when Don would say, "Hey I've got an idea. Could I just have 30 minutes?" And so Ben and I would go for a walk or get a cup of coffee or something like that and leave Don to it and then we'd come back and he'd read us a page of dialog that he'd written or something like that and we'd just howl laughing. Anyway, we had a really fun time.



Q: How close was was the movie when the funding collapsed? How close were you guys to making the movie?

We were going to open the production office the next day. That's how close we were. When the one investor dropped out, it was a really big blow and it had come after a series of just crazy difficult time(s) raising money. When I think back to that time, it just makes me want to curl up in a ball, because it was so, so frustrating trying to get money together for this movie. It shouldn't have been that hard, but it just was. I guess part of it was that people who have money to invest in movies tend to be older and maybe a bit more conservative, so they wouldn't necessarily have read *Blue Like Jazz*, but based on its reputation they would have certain assumptions about it and then they read the screenplay and realized their assumptions weren't necessarily true. As I've said many times, it's a PG-13 movie and it earns its rating. From the beginning, we didn't know how else we could tell a story set at Reed college without getting a PG-13 rating and, in fact, the biggest challenge was "How do you *not* make it an R rated movie?" I think maybe that was part of it. It was, of course, a recession, so that never helps, but I still maintain that it shouldn't have been that hard to get money together. I think more than anything, it just didn't have a ready precedent and people, investors in particular, get skittish when you can't say, "Oh, it's like this."

Q: So, how did the Kickstarter campaign happen then?

The investors dropped out. I called Don, I think, the same day I got the news, broke it to him. I was really bummed out. He was really bummed out, because it had been almost 4 years we had been working on this and this was kind of the last straw. And then Don blogged about it the next morning and said the movie's not going to happen. That took me a little bit by surprise. I didn't know he was going to officially pronounce it dead. I think in his mind it was a like mercy killing. He just didn't want to see me suffer anymore. But then all these people read the blog and started writing back and felt really strongly that the movie needed to be made and would volunteer 25 bucks or 50 bucks or get my friends together and we'll get you 100 bucks. A few people mentioned Kickstarter, which, at that point was a pretty new idea, but two guys in Franklin – Zach Prichard and Jonathan Frazier – they actually sent us a little video and they pushed even harder on the idea of, "Let us start a Kickstarter campaign, because we think there are a lot of people like us that really want to see this movie made." My recollection was that, although they had read *Blue Like Jazz*, it was really *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* that inspired them to want to see the movie made. So, Don called me up and said, "Do you want to meet with these guys?" And I was like, "I don't have anything better to do." So I met with them a few days later and Don was on a conference line and they pitched us on what this would look like and they were very organized, very enthusiastic and idealistic, but I thought they were naive, because I'd been working on this for so long and had no success. I think I told them, too, that frankly, to not be able to get this movie made has been my greatest professional failure by far and I'm not sure I'm ready for this public of a humiliation if we can't get the money raised through Kickstarter and part of that was because at that point the most money any movie had raised was like 50 thousand bucks or something and we were needing a quarter of a million in 30 days to get the movie made and we had a clock ticking, because we were going to lose our lead actor if we didn't get it shot starting in 30 days. And so they said, "Do you have any better ideas?" And I didn't, so the campaign got launched 3 or 4 days later and just took off.

Q: How did you feel when the movie got a second chance?

It was really wild, because the response was almost immediate and it came from so many places. Obviously from all over the United States, but we had a lot of backers from Europe and Australia and Asia and South Africa. They were all telling kind of similar stories as to why they wanted to back the movie. Of course, I got to hear a lot of those stories, because I didn't think it was going to work, so when you provide incentives [on Kickstarter] – "You give us 50 bucks and we'll send you a t-shirt and give us 100 bucks and we'll put your name in the credits," and I said, "Give us 10 bucks and I will call and thank you personally," and frankly I figured even if it worked, maybe that's going to be a few hundred calls or something like that. But, I didn't think it was going to work. And



honestly, at that point, I didn't have anything better to do anyway than to make phone calls, because it beats sitting and staring into the distance for hours at a time from the depression of not getting the movie made. So when the donations started coming in, I started making the calls right away, at first, just to kind of keep up and then that became impossible, but I was hearing stories almost immediately as to why this movie was important to the backers and that helped to really fire me up and inspire other people to want to join us – including crew who might not have done it based on the money we had, but wanted to be a part of something that they thought could be historic.

Q: So, what was it like making the movie in light of knowing that so many people wanted the movie to be made?

It was so much fun. There was so much energy going into that set. I think everybody felt it from the crew and the producers to the actors. Everyone was just into it. We had a great experience on *The Second Chance* and I didn't think it could get any better than that, but this was even beyond that. There was so much enthusiasm for what was being made.

Q: How did you feel about the final result?

I'm really happy with the way the movie turned out. I've never felt bad about a project I've made, like it just failed or this just wasn't what I anticipated. Usually they come out something close to what I was hoping for, but typically you're always a little disappointed, like they're not quite what you thought. But this was the first time that it actually came out better than I was anticipating. Certainly better than it had any right to turn out based on the limited budget we had. Usually you have months of pre-production and our pre-production started happening about 3 or 4 days into the Kickstarter campaign. It's like, "Oh, man this looks like this is going to work. We've got to get ready to make a movie." The Kickstarter campaign ended on October 25 and we started shooting the next day. So, we were in pre-production while the Kickstarter campaign was happening. It was really really tight, but I've been preparing to make this movie for 4 years, so it wasn't like I hadn't already done a fair bit of preparation.

Q: What's been your proudest moment after things happened?

Being at the South by Southwest film festival was a big deal. It conferred a certain legitimacy that many of these projects don't certainly get. The even better part was being

at the Paramount theater (that was our world premiere at SXSW) and it was just such a blast. It was like, if I had gone around and hand-picked a thousand people to sit in the movie and watch it, it couldn't have been any better. You know, they were getting the jokes and we were all sitting in the same row and we were looking at each other and thumbs up and we're laughing at the way people were laughing. It was just like the perfect audience. That was certainly one of the high points.

Q: Is there anything you would change through this whole process – obviously, besides the funding situation?



I would have knocked about 4 years off of the gestation period. I might feel differently in a year or something like that, but I'm really happy with the way it went down. And I'm really happy with the cast. It's just one of those rare movies where I'm really happy with the way it turned out. I'm surprised that, for whatever reason, it ended up being more controversial within church circles than I anticipated. That actually surprised me. When we were making it, we really didn't think we were making anything controversial, because there's nothing in it that's contradictory to historic biblical Christianity. I guess people's notion of what a Christian movie is has become so calcified that when they see something different, they freak out a little bit. The fans of the project were for the most part really happy with

the way the movie turned out, but people who went in sort assuming this was going to be the latest in what they think of as a Christian movie genre were, I guess, surprised.

Q: What were some of the diverse reactions you heard about the film?

There's a Christian movie review website called *Movieguide* and their review was insane. So, that would be kind of the extreme. They're like a very, very conservative fundamentalist... It's a very odd review, because I think the assumption is, if you create a character that has a certain frame of reference, obviously the filmmakers must believe that as well. That's probably one extreme. There were reactions all in-between and mainstream press reactions. We had some really good reviews and we had some really bad reviews. I think anytime you're dealing with subject matter where the book is subtitled "Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality" and any time you're dealing with that subject in any form, you're bound to get a lot of diverse reactions. I think my favorite critical reaction is one reviewer said, "The movie is never boring," and, more than anything else, that's what we wanted. We wanted to make a movie that just kept moving and kept surprising you and wasn't boring. Because lots of times, when I check out of movies, in particular with Christian movies, it's because I just feel like I've seen this movie so many times, I know exactly how this movie is going to end and more than anything I go to movies, because I want it to keep engaging and surprising me to where I never have any idea what's going to happen next. That was what we aspired to.

Q: How did it do in the theater?

It did about 600 thousand dollars in the theater. We were hoping for better box office. We didn't spend a lot of money in promotion, because we didn't have a lot of money ... but for an independent movie it did fine, but I think we were hoping it was going to do a little better.

Q: So let's talk about the Blu-Ray/DVD release. What kinds of things are on the disc?

There's the usual stuff. The director's commentary is Don and Ben and me having a really fun time doing the commentary. There's the normal behind-the-scenes stuff, but there 's also stuff we had a bit of fun with. Usually movies put deleted scenes and I didn't want to put deleted scenes, because there was invariably a reason why the scene was deleted, so why would I want everybody to see that? So we ended up putting deleted shots instead. There's like a jokey thing where I'm supposedly doing a master class



“In many ways the experience with Blue Like Jazz has felt like I’m releasing I Wanna Be A Clone 30 years ago and it surprises me how little things have changed in many ways.”

where I’m telling the actors how to act. I went back and replaced my voice on actual shots. I don’t know if I’m describing this well, but if you see it, it’s hopefully amusing. There’s the story behind the Kickstarter campaign, which is really interesting. There’s a piece on the music with Danny Seim from Menomena, who did the music and did a fantastic job. That was fun. And our animator Jonathan Richter did a piece, which I thought was really fun. So yeah, it’s good stuff.

Q: Speaking of music, let’s change pace a little bit. Rumor has it you made some music during the down time?

Yeah, I was so frustrated at not being able to get the movie made that, just out of creative frustration, it’s like, “I used to make music and I could go into the studio and get something done in 4-6 months instead of 4-6 years.” So, I got together with Peter Furler, John Painter and Jimmy Abegg. We got together in the studio and started recording stuff and were having a great time. It came together really well. In fact, we were in the studio when the Kickstarter campaign happened. So, we’re all checking our cellphones and laptops and watching as it’s going down. The only drag was pretty soon it pretty soon became obvious that this movie was going to get funded and we were not going to be able to get the (album) project finished. And that’s pretty much how it’s been ever since. We all met together a few weeks ago and we’re going to try to figure out a way to get that project finished up this fall. Now that I’ve already said this, I’m not sure Peter is allowed by his record label to officially be classified as a band member, so it may end up being under my name, but it’s definitely a collaborative effort and it’s been really fun working on it.

Q: Did “Life Preserved” come out of those sessions?

It did, it came out of that and, in fact, I ended up sending the track to Danny from Menomena, because as good as the track had come out, it didn’t fit quite as well with the musical landscape that had been established in the movie, so Danny added some stuff and it wasn’t quite a remix, but it was more than him just adding a track or two. So, that final piece ended up being kind of a collaboration between the band and Danny.

Q: You’ve got a history of making music and now movies. Going forward are you still a movie guy or a music guy? Are you starting to think maybe you want to move back into doing more music?

I’ve invested so much time and energy into filmmaking, that’s really my focus. But I’ve been working on movies for so long, I may end up taking some kind of short musical sabbatical (I guess you could call it that) and get this project done. And Chagall Guevera has a live album that’s been 90% done for the last 3 or 4 years.

Q: You would make so many people happy with that album.

Yeah, I know. It’s really good and it needs to get out. We’ll try to get that project done.

Q: A lot of your music you made 25 years ago was about the state of the church. Especially as you’ve gone through this Blue Like Jazz experience, what do you see differently about the church now versus 25 years ago when you were making the kind of music you were making. Did you have some of those same emotions as you were watching people’s reaction to the movie?

That’s a good question. In many ways the experience with Blue Like Jazz has felt like I’m releasing I Wanna Be A Clone 30 years ago and it surprises me how little things have changed in many ways. When we talk about music, there’s no comparison between 30 years ago and what’s going on today. Going from where Christian music was its own little ghetto partly because it had no choice; the mainstream musical world wasn’t interested in it. Looking at it today and it’s ended up becoming a spawning ground for a lot of fantastic music to the point where most Christians making music wouldn’t even consider signing to a Christian label, and I think in many ways that’s a good thing. We’ve seen incredible growth and creative growth on the music side. I feel like filmmaking is like it’s 30 years ago. Arguments that I’ve had about Blue Like Jazz in particular – a lot of it feels like I’m putting out I Wanna Be A Clone 30 years ago. A lot of it feels really familiar – in some ways kind of depressingly familiar. It feels like there is a very strict calcified Christian movie establishment that knows how to make one thing and frankly are not remotely interested in making anything else. It seems like (the) sermon message trumps all other considerations – including artistic considerations. It just all seems really familiar, except it’s movies instead of music.

Q: I’m guessing Bob Briner’s book Roaring Lambs comes up a lot in these kind of discussions.

I wish it came up more. I feel like those lessons were learned in the music world, but when it comes to filmmaking ... a lot of this is because it’s expensive. You can make a really good-sounding album for 5 or 10 thousand bucks, but you really can’t make a decent-looking movie for much less than a million dollars, so that’s part of it. The writing is part of it as well. The Christian community needs to be developing better writers. It’s complicated, because the scope of it all is so much bigger, but we’ve got a lot of work to do.

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Album reviews

41 ALBUMS 46 GEAR, GADGETS, COMICS, BOOKS & FILM



AS I LAY DYING *AWAKENED*

As I Lay Dying is the type of band that needs no introduction. Metal stalwarts for over a decade, they've consistently written and produced quality, uncompromising metal and *Awakened* is no exception.

Having worked previously with the technical-almost-robotic producing of Killswitch Engage guitarist Adam Dutkiewicz, they've now enlisted noted punk-rock producer and The Descendants drummer Bill Stevenson (NOFX, Rise Against) to helm *Awakened*. AILD, always technically sound with their I's dotted and T's crossed, make this pairing interesting – given punk's notoriety for their “anything goes” ethos, this marriage still found a way to work: Crisp, clean songwriting with an undercurrent of feedback and a slight hint of spontaneity. The lead-off track (and first single from the record) “Cauterize” easily fills its job requirements: From the jump, let the listener know what they're in for. In this case, it's a blaring scream that takes silence, rips through it, and lets you know they're not toning down anything. Or backing off at all, for that matter, which is exactly what I want from a decade-old band: A prevailing “do it our way” mentality among the easy choice to write more “palatable” work.

Song-wise, there is some incredible guitar work here. Brace yourself at three-quarters of the way through “Defender.” Enjoy the off-tonal solo that gives “My Only Home” new life halfway through. And closing out the record, “Tear Out My Eyes” has impressive guitar work that's not gaudy, a road metalheads can easily wander down. If you've ever been a fan of As I Lay Dying (and you should be), *Awakened* easily embraces the quip “same song, different verse.” This time, it's the same band, new record, new songs, equally stellar. For the next chapter in AILD's band, a new producer, an introspective lyrical direction, combined with the same intransigent songwriting was a winning combination. [METAL-BLADE] DAVID STAGG

Rating system

- 05 CLASSIC
- 04 FABULOUS
- 03 SOLID
- 02 SUSPECT
- 01 AMISS
- * 1/2



TOURNIQUET

ANTISEPTIC BLOODBATH

Beware all partakers of auditory indulgence when consuming the latest offering from Tourniquet, as it may become habit forming. *Antiseptic Bloodbath* has finally found its way into the collective musical cosmos and worth the wait it is. Ted Kirkpatrick and company have provided a new musical balm to sooth the impatience of their rabid and devoted fan base. *Antiseptic Bloodbath* provides the technical excellence that fans have come to expect and will be rewarded handsomely. Whether it's interweaving elements of classical progressions with furious guitar and tremendous percussive play, this release is the real deal. Musical compositions such as "Fed By Ravens Eaten by Vultures" (this writer's favorite) or "The Maiden Who Slept in a Glass Coffin" exhibit depth and strong songwriting sensibilities. The guitar sound on this release is infectious and benefits many of the songs, "Chart of the Elements," the title track, "86 Bullets" for example. Tight, punchy and plenty of drive. Speaking of guitar playing, a true amalgam of styles and players appear, including Marty Friedman, Bruce Franklin (Trouble), Pat Travers, Karl Sanders (Nile), Santiago Dobles (Aghora) and, of course, Aaron Guerra – Tourniquet's own master of the 6-string. Ted has never played better and adds so much to each song by his playing it's amazing. Luke has delivered another fine vocal performance and sounds at the top of his game. What more can be said? What more should be said? The lyrical content is deep and thought-provoking as we've all come to expect from Tourniquet. Biblical concepts delivered in a package that is guaranteed to stir discussion. The long and short of it is this, Tourniquet's newest album *Antiseptic Bloodbath* is a stellar piece of technical metal mayhem that deserves its place on the highest tier of releases this year. **[PATHOGENIC] KEVIN CROTHERS**



WE SHOT THE MOON

LOVE AND FEAR

The vocalization is controlled and tends to a higher range. The music polished like that of any band that knows their way around a studio. However, overall the album sounds, well do I dare say it, homogenous? The first five songs go by without much difference in between. The second half of the album offers a bit of a change of pace. "We Can Wait" offered keyboards joining the pop rock sound. The following track, "Sonrisa," seems a bit out of place with what sounds like a blend of something out of the surf rock of the '60s complete with whistle and an almost Western rhythm to the guitar. "When I'm Gone" follows and seems to jump decades; like something out of the a-ha '80s with its keyboard riffs. (Yes, I am referencing the Norwegian pop band from that decade here.) "Forgive" offers the listener a melodic rock song at its best with the lyric and music well suited to one another and an upbeat tune that allows multiple sounds to play and bubble about. Overall, this album is made to soothe, not move the listener. **[I AM FOR YOU] SARAH ROBERTS**



THE CHARIOT

ONE WING

I absolutely love this piece of work. The Chariot – as a whole – was a game changer, becoming the barometer for live show mayhem whose songwriting was equally as spastic and frenetic. With their latest release *One Wing*, it's as close to game changing from a band that attempts to shed every limitation ever placed on it, whether by themselves, fans, critics, or even physical space. The ten-track record, whose one-word song titles compose the two sentences "Forget Not Your First Love. Speak in Tongues and Cheek.," kicks off with back-to-back shotgun blasts before switching gears completely on the third track "Your." Nearly every metalcore band has thrown in an instrumental or otherwise non-metal musical interlude on their record, some with success, most with the feeling that "everyone else is doing it, so why shouldn't we?" But "Your" is one of the most beautiful, short-lived interludes I've ever heard. It's a standout that sounds like a hymn, a rousing community call-to-arms in the softest way possible that not only unites the record, but could easily be intended to unite all of their listeners – a one-minute reminder that everyone, even the most ruthless of hardcore bands, needs to take a second to stop and rest. Immediately following, "First" brings in an almost mariachi-style breakdown that alludes to the confrontational nature of the Old West, a feeling The Chariot's sound has always invoked. And with every following song, there seems to be at least one thing The Chariot does to keep you on your toes. It wouldn't be The Chariot without that – but this time, they've really outdone themselves. **[GOOD FIGHT] DAVID STAGG**



THE WEDDING

NO DIRECTION

The Wedding has been at it for years, but they kick it up a notch on their first outing on Tooth & Nail Records. The first several tracks set the tone with driving rhythms and breakdowns that never abandon melody. The Wedding recall new labelmates Classic Crime, as they perfectly balance pop punk jubilation with crunchy riffing heaviness and the occasional scream. Pleasantly surprising are a few lead guitar solos that are uncommon for the genre, but work quite well. Perhaps the most unique track on album is "Mors Tua Nos Vita," which begins with Bon Iver balladry before giving way to syncopated beats and swelling choral vocals. Things get heavy on the next two tracks before returning to a sing-along ethos to close things out. The Wedding manage to walk a path that's been well trod over the past decade, while including enough surprises to be well worth a listen. **[TOOTH & NAIL] TIM HALLILA**



ABANDONED POOLS

SUBLIME CURRENCY

Abandoned Pools is on the verge of releasing its third album. The time away, and experiences in life have brought melodies and synth-laced tracks together to create *Sublime Currency*. Songwriter Tommy Walter put together a beautiful synthesized symphony. By the end of standout track "Unrehearsed," you feel like you're listening to the soundtrack of a movie. Other standout tracks, "Legionnaire" and "From Long Sleep," captivate its audience with songs of love. With each song being unique to their own tracks, they blend well together to tell the overall story. While fans of The Pilot and Owl City will be able to add a new artist to their collection, the Abandoned Pool's longtime fans will have no trouble falling in love with this album from the start. **[TOOTH & NAIL] TONY D. BRYANT**

Ratings

	DV	Writer
As I Lay Dying <i>Awakened</i>	04	04
Tourniquet <i>Antiseptic Bloodbath</i>	03*	04
We Shot the Moon <i>Love and Fear</i>	03	03
The Chariot <i>One Wing</i>	03*	04*
The Wedding <i>No Direction</i>	03	03
Abandoned Pools <i>Sublime Currency</i>	04	04
Leper <i>Beautiful Gray Day</i>	03*	03
The Modern Post <i>Grace Alone</i>	04	04
Owl City <i>The Midsummer Station</i>	03*	
Benjamin Dunn & the... <i>Fable</i>	04	04
Close to Home <i>Momentum</i>	03	04*
Christafari <i>Reggae Worship: A Roots Revival</i>	03	04
A Bullet For Pretty Boy <i>Symbiosis</i>	03*	02
Living Fire <i>Jesus Rules</i>	03	03

**LEPER****BEAUTIFUL GRAY DAY**

Longtime goth outfit Leper deliver a set of dark songs creatively weaving acoustic and electronic elements. Leadman Skot Shaw broods over an intertextual palette of acoustic and electric guitar, keyboards, electronic beats, etc. That palette is complicated and further darkened by vocal samples and vocal distortions. On songs like the closer "The Way It All Unfolds," the acoustic elements prevail. On songs like "The Artist in You," the electronic elements overwhelm to industrial rock in the vein of NIN. Shaw's lyrics give reason for the bleak mood; harping on death, torment and suffering with bitter clarity and religious imagery. From start to finish, *Beautiful Gray Day* riffs on a fairly steady mood in a fairly steady way – making it an album suited only for downhearted sensibilities. And yet, it is not all bleak for Shaw. In the midst of torment, Shaw hopefully promises "I will pray..." Further, the aptly titled lament, "I Hate Everything," ends on a hopeful note: "...it's a beautiful gray day; I don't have to face it alone, even when there's nobody home." With these small glimmers of hope amidst darkness, Shaw reminds us that hope is not lost. **[GRRR] JONATHAN NELSON**

**THE MODERN POST****GRACE ALONE**

The Modern Posts' sound is driving, upbeat, and joyful. Sonically, these songs are somewhere between *The Alchemy Index* era of Thrice and mid '90s The Cure. Dustin Kensure's instantly recognizable vocals deliver an honest, emotive performance with the band's synth and rhythm-driven sound giving new life to praise and worship standards such as: "Just as I Am," the tried and true "Amazing Grace (God of Grace)" and "White as Snow." I didn't know what to expect when I first received this. To be honest, I was a little apprehensive to the idea of the vocalist from one of my favorite bands doing a worship project. But as soon as the first few bars of "Just As I Am" played out, I was instantly won over by the refreshing sound and earnestness in Kensure's vocals. Great songs + great production = a very exciting debut EP. **[MARS HILL] JEFF CUNNINGHAM**

**OWL CITY****THE MIDSUMMER STATION**

The pressure and hopeful expectations placed upon Adam Young's shoulders add up to no small weight. While the coy, shy and witty artist has delivered a generous portion of the kind of bright and infectious joy that pleasantly surprised a pop rock world with *Ocean Eyes* in '09, these tunes carry a slightly more "serious" piano-rock (or dance pop) based sonic pallet. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but the electronic quirkiness was part of Owl City's charm and it's been partly smoothed over with production here. This collection of tunes comes closer to the "magic" of *Ocean Eyes* than last year's *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, so maybe we could call this "cautious optimism" as opposed to crazy joy. **[REPUBLIC] DOUG VAN PELT**

BENJAMIN DUNN AND THE ANIMAL ORCHESTRA**FABLE**

The Curious Case of Benjamin Dunn is a fable. First of all, I am not sure why Doug Van Pelt, the editor of this rag asked me to review a movie that is going on 4 years old now, but here goes... Reversing the aging process is a tricky business and... Okay, this isn't about the movie; this is about the new album from Benjamin Dunn and the Animal Orchestra. This is a concept project that is truly on the level of an epic fable, from the quirky lullaby intro to the upbeat fun of the first track, "My Name Is Eustace," you will quickly realize there is something special going on here. Musically *Fable* is extremely original, especially for this market. You may hear a few familiar elements, from the psychedelic sounds of Polyphonic Spree and the alt-pop vibe of Fun, as well as the artistic moods of Mae and Owl City. This is a truly a clever and entertaining release from a band that knows exactly who they are, which is so refreshing amid the slew of bands that all sound the same. The Animal Orchestra sounds as good as any of the current crop of hit U.K. bands. Surprisingly, they are not from England or Europe, but hail from California. The album quickly involves some amazing electro-pop and the song "Caspian" is one of the best you will hear. They meld real instruments like guitar; bass, drum and piano with modern and retro keyboards and all the while Benjamin Dunn's vocals float through with a modern alternative lilt. Little orchestral intros to songs tie the record together with lyrics about love, faith and life. Benjamin sings of mystery and of hope in the track "Sing:" "Oh, look how you have loved me. Oh, breathe life into my lungs. Oh, I followed lions into you. I eat from trees of gold." Fans of quirky pop and C.S. Lewis will want to get *Fable* immediately as this reviewer has not heard anything like it for some time. This is a perfect late summer record and one that will probably end up on some "best of the year" lists. **[JOY REVOLUTION] DR. TONY SHORE**

**CLOSE TO HOME****MOMENTUM**

Cincinnati's own Close to Home's new album, *Momentum*, is the perfect title for this album. The band came out swinging and hit a home run. With a new line-up, tragedies and memories have helped push this band to a new level. Producer Andrew Wade (A Day To Remember, The World Alive) has done it again. The album is very well put together and sounds amazing. Songs like "Family Ties" and "Young and Stupid" have crowd favorites all over them, while the opening track, "Don't Waste Your Breath," will get the crowd going in a hurry. Vocalist Andrew DeNeef shows his range with growls and melodies. *Momentum* has set the bar high for the band, and recently reaching #4 on Billboard's Heatseekers Chart, the band is only going to keep climbing. **[RAZOR & TIE] TONY D. BRYANT**

CHRISTAFARI**REGGAE WORSHIP: A ROOTS REVIVAL**

Yay for friends! That's not to say that Christafari couldn't have made *Reggae Worship: A Roots Revival* without the other righteous reggae labelmate players and singers that populate their third praise long player. But it adds to the communal feel other praise & worship albums offer by way of a concert audience. The posse approach works especially well on the sing-along "I Shall Not Be Moved" and a Chris Tomlin remake. But the polished approach to genre authenticity Mark Mohr and his mates proffer lends itself well to the joy and gravity that should ideally be at play in the experience of congregational song. The generous 17 tracks cover public domain standards and recent favorites from the charts of CCLI (the performance rights group that makes sure your church is paying to use all those choruses). And their originals are better than ever, as if their previous two p&w outings prepared them for most everything clicking into place here. And continued kudos to Mohr's Mrs., Avion Blackman, who could wrap her pipes around nigh any couplet and make it sound like the transmission of angels.

[LION OF ZION] JAMIE LEE RAKE

**A BULLET FOR PRETTY BOY****SYMBIOSIS**

A Bullet For Pretty Boy just released their new album, *Symbiosis*. With it being recorded at Planet Z studios with producer Zeuss, it still fell short of something better. ABFPB have still yet to find their sound. The melodies on the album often seem to sound like an after thought. The track "Illumination" is nothing but an instrumental that seems to serve no purpose to the album. It split the record into separate halves, almost separating two EP's instead of creating a single LP. The breakdowns came across forced and rushed. However, there does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel. The final track "Self-Disclosure" is the best track on the album. The track is put together well, not rushed, and plays well with the vocal melodies and sound. If this is a glimpse of the direction the band is going, then there is still hope. **[RAZOR & TIE] TONY D. BRYANT**

**LIVING FIRE****JESUS RULES**

Thumper Punk's Living Fire is an old school punk band from Brazil, with a great love for Jesus. With short, fast songs and quick lyrics, they bring their love for GOD to the front. *Jesus Rules* has hints of pop infused with the punk, keeping things balanced. Living Fire has put together an album that screams for attention and letting those know it is okay to be punk, and still love GOD. **[THUMPER PUNK] TONY D. BRYANT**

**ANCHOR & BRAILLE**

THE QUIET LIFE

The gentle keyboards and electronic percussion that introduce "Goes without Saying" on Anchor & Braille's *The Quiet Life* are like a quiet reminder that we're not in Anberlin anymore. Anchor & Braille is the side project of Anberlin singer Stephen Christian, and *The Quiet Life* is appropriately filled with quietly beautiful music. The sort of power-pop guitars so prevalent in Anberlin are mostly AWOL throughout *The Quiet Life*. In fact, the electric guitars that show up during "Kodachrome" are closer to amplified jazz chords, instead. On it, Christian sings, "All you really have is your memories." Granted, these aren't the same bad memories Paul Simon sang about on his old '70s song of the same name. Nevertheless, there is much truth to the statement, 'All you really have is your memories.' And for the most part, Christian has given us many wonderful moments to remember. **[FOOTH & NAIL] DAN MACINTOSH**

**SAM PHILLIPS**

MARTINIS & BIKINIS

Posing on your album cover with three guys under your bed while you look like you're recovering from a big ol' "O" is a sure way to signal you're over wanting whatever support you had from the Evangelical market that once supported your artistry. At least one Christian pop FM open-minded enough to have played Collective Soul 18 years ago when formerly Leslie now Sam Phillips unleashed *Martinis & Bikinis* and for the reason encapsulated in the previous sentence. That's understandable and probably how La Sam preferred the situation pan out as she sought space away from the shadows of the previous career arc that kept dogging her since *The Turning*, at least. This reissue proves it's still the largely dark and quizzical work of a woman whose commercial and spiritual crossroads intersected in such a way to birth some of her most compelling, if not most encouraging, songs. What could have ended up a ponderous wail of angst was, thankfully, abetted by her then-husband T Bone Burnett's framing of his muse/wife's songs in settings that find the sweet spot between power pop, Americana and psychedelia. Masterful stuff all around from all parties concerned, but *M's & B's* is likely best reserved for the occasional dark night of your soul, of which it's my hope you don't have nearly as many as Phillips seems to have. **[OMNIVORE] JAMIE LEE RAKE**

**12 STONES**

BENEATH THE SCARS

(Executive Music Group)

Rating: 3

12 Stones' album *Beneath the Scars* has some scars of its own, having been delayed about a year and changing its name from *Only Human* to its current title. It's also been completely remixed. There's the athletic cliché, 'no pain, no gain,' however, and this patience-testing release appears to be well worth the wait. Producer Skidd Mills, who has worked with the band in the past, brings out the best in this veteran group. Perhaps Mills' best work is displayed in the way he's tempered Paul McCoy's gravelly vocals. On past efforts, McCoy's voice could be harsh to the point of distraction. And yet, on "That Changes Everything," McCoy's voice actually sounds pretty. With that said, however, 'pretty' is likely not what any self-respecting rock band ultimately attains to and *Beneath the Scars* includes plenty of hearty hard rock. From the grunge-inspired "Infected," to the bass-driven, propulsive "Bulletproof," 12 Stones shows no difficulty in cranking it up. Lyrically, the group behaves like the voice of reason in a crazy world. Songs such as "Psycho" and "Pretty Poison" highlight the world's darkness, while "Infected" is a reminder of just how hard it is to be in the world, but not of it. Indeed, 12 Stones rises above it all with *Beneath the Scars*. **[EXECUTIVE MUSIC GROUP] DAN MACINTOSH**

**TOBY MAC**

EYE ON IT

Few names are more ubiquitous with current Christian music than Toby Mac. That being said, I don't know if I have ever even listened to one of his albums. I've always been aware of his overall sound, but couldn't name you a single song that I know. Okay, disclaimer over. I was surprised by how much I actually liked this record. The songs ebbed and flowed together from the top of the opening track to the last, with stellar production values and several melodic surprises it kept my interest throughout. Also, it was also nice to hear an album in today's musical world that is unashamedly full of Christian content without speaking a lot of what I like to call "Christianeese," it's just real life spoken through a Christ-centered filter. Christian music has few legitimate "Super Star's," so it's great when the ones we do have in our industry release such strong records. **[FOREFRONT] JEFF CUNNINGHAM**

**SAFE HAVEN**

CHASING THE SUN

The members of Safe Haven are likely too young to remember The Alarm and early U2. However, the group's *Chasing the Sun* album is filled with various chips off each of those cornerstone blocks. There are many moments where lead vocalist Gil Sandoval is a dead ringer for The Alarm's Mike Peters, and these lines from "Home" seem straight out of The Alarm songbook: "Sometimes life is not what you want it to be/Sometimes life's a little bit harder than it seems." *Chasing the Sun* is the sound of being young, innocent and idealistic. The title track includes the words, "And we'll say we were dumb and all alone/But we're still chasing the sun." You may say youth is wasted on the young. However, even older music fans can get a kick out of this music. And some older fans really need that kick. **[LIVE LOVE] DAN MACINTOSH**

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Anchor & Braille <i>The Quiet Life</i>	03*	03
Sam Phillips <i>Martinis & Bikinis</i>	05	04
12 Stones <i>Beneath the Scars</i>	03	03
Toby Mac <i>Eye on It</i>	03	03*
Safe Haven <i>Chasing the Sun</i>	03	03

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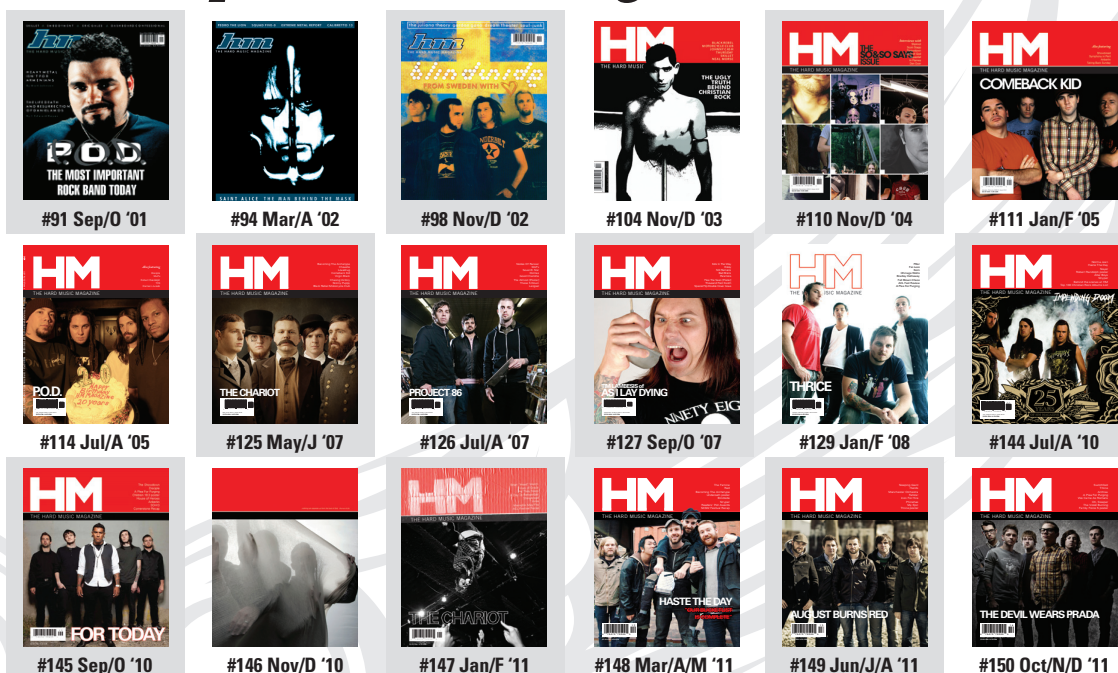
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LIFEstyle



JACKSON MILLE PHOBIA KING V™

The Jackson Mille Phobia King V™ guitar, only available in Europe, was built to Kreator vocalist and guitarist Mille Petrozza's exact specifications and is equipped with an EMG® 81 active humbucking pickup, a maple neck with a compound radius rosewood fingerboard and 24 jumbo frets, recessed Floyd Rose® Special bridge, two-way toggle switch and special gig bag with embroidered Kreator logo. Finished in matte Black, other features include a Kreator logo at the 12th fret and custom Shark fin outline inlays. [jacksonguitars.com]

SQUIER VINTAGE MODIFIED TELECASTER BASS

The Vintage Modified Telecaster Bass sports a time-honored body and headstock shape that are well-balanced by a comfortable medium scale length (32") that will appeal to bassists and guitarists alike. Remarkable tonal versatility comes from a single powerful Duncan Designed™ PB-102 SCPB single-coil pickup and three-way switching among special tone circuits, which feature a modern bass sound (middle switch position, volume and tone controls), softer "double bass" sound (neck switch position, volume control only) and authentic tic-tac "baritone" sound (bridge switch position, volume control only).

[squierguitars.com]



AFFINITY SERIES STRAT & JUNIOR AMP

The Affinity Series Strat HSS with G-DEC® Junior Amp is the leader of the packs. The set features a humbucking pickup-equipped Affinity Strat HSS guitar and the compact and amazingly versatile Fender G-DEC®. The Squier Affinity Strat HSS is available in Brown Sunburst and Candy Apple Red, and features a scorching humbucking bridge pickup, sparkling single-coil neck and middle pickups on a classic three-ply black/white/black pickguard, rock-solid bolt-on maple neck with rosewood fingerboard, skirted black control knobs and a sharp new gold-and-black Squier headstock logo. [squierguitars.com]



FENDER AMERICAN VINTAGE '59 STRATOCASTER

Fender's American Vintage series introduces an all-new lineup of original-era model year guitars that bring Fender history and heritage to authentic and exciting new life. With key features and pivotal design elements spanning the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, new American Vintage series instruments delve deep into Fender's roots – preserving an innovative U.S. guitar-making legacy and vividly demonstrating how many of the most desirable instruments of the past can be expertly recreated in look, feel and sound. Features a slim-profile D-shaped maple neck, dark rosewood slab fingerboard and lightweight alder body. All-new pickups wound to period-correct specs and sound. Aged plastic knobs. Vintage-accurate bridge saddles and tuner spacing. [fender.com]

GODLYKE MAXON DB10 DUAL BOOSTER

The company that invented the classic "808" overdrive has now re-invented the clean booster. Introducing the Maxon DB10 Dual Booster – a unique concept in booster design, the DB10 features two completely independent Boost circuits in a single compact housing. Each of the DB10's Boost circuits has its own input and output jacks, allowing them to be cascaded into one another in any order. In addition, a separate overdrive/distortion pedal can be placed in between the DB10's two channels, allowing the user to increase either Volume, amount of Gain, or both simultaneously. [maxonfx.com]



JACKSON ADRIAN SMITH SDX GUITAR

The Jackson Adrian Smith Signature SDX guitar features a Snow White basswood body, bolt-on maple neck, compound-radius rosewood or maple fingerboard, HSS configuration (high-output Jackson bridge pickup, noiseless middle and neck single-coil pickups), white pickguard (rosewood fingerboard model) or black pickguard (maple fingerboard model), five-way blade selector switch, Jackson tuners, Floyd Rose® Special tremolo system and black hardware. [jacksonguitars.com]

JACKSON JS2 KELLY BIRD IV

The Bloodline is proud to welcome two new basses to its JS Series, the JS2 Kelly Bird IV and the JS3 Kelly Bird IV. These new and highly distinctive designs are the result of a longtime collaboration between two metal icons, Jackson guitars and legendary Megadeth bass player David Ellefson. The JS2 Kelly Bird IV offers striking looks coupled with pummeling tones. Features include a basswood body, bolt-on maple neck, 21-fret rosewood fingerboard with block inlays, Jackson's unrivaled compound-radius, dual Jackson JS high-output covered pickups, Jackson high-mass bridge and Jackson tuners. Available in Burnt Cherry Sunburst and Matte Black. [jacksonguitars.com]



LIFEstyle



CUSTOM IPHONE 4 CASE

Yes, a company that takes your original art, photo, illustration and makes a custom case that's high glossy and sturdy and protective. It's about time and it's stinkin' cool. The shells are sturdy and pretty lightweight. In our experience, nothing



BEADFORLIFE EARRINGS

Each of these beaded earrings are made with love by women in Uganda and this very practical and fair trade business model actually helps lift these women and their entire families out of extreme poverty and on the road to an sustaining and independent lifestyle. What could be cooler than that? But that's not all. The earrings are colorful, lightweight and beautiful. The organization behind this effort supports true entrepreneurship in the Ugandan economy by helping their members setup

DESERT HIGH

BY DOUG VAN PELT

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL, flight testing & TIME TRAVEL? read it all in the book *Desert High* HM Editor Doug Van Pelt's first novel

DesertHighBook.com

HM



beats the Cadillac of iPhone cases – the one-piece and slimmer Griffin Threadless (so far) – but the ability to make an HM-custom cover (with our December 2011 cover artwork on it) is pretty darn primo. The bottom piece tends to want to slide open with use, which is slightly troublesome, but these looks kill. Of course, you can upload your own design pretty simply using their website. The delivery time to get your custom case is pretty quick, too. [getuncommon.com] [Price: \$39]



savings accounts, providing training and matching business funds. They have a vocational training program designed to help youth workers (16-26) get their hands involved and on their way to earning a living. BeadforLife also provides much-needed access to malaria diagnosis and (simple) treatment, HIV testing, nutritional supplements and other health services. Stateside, you can get involved deeper than shopping by hosting a BeadParty. [beadforlife.org] [Price: \$12 - \$15]

LIFEstyle



BLUE LIKE JAZZ

"Why don't you go somewhere they don't hand you the script and tell you to copy it?" This is a quote from author Don Miller's dad in the film as young Don is about to head off to Bible college in his pursuit of higher education. After discovering his mom having an affair with his youth pastor,

Don re-routes his education plans and heads to Portland, OR's Reed College. This is the uber liberal setting for his crisis of faith. Sets a new standard for so-called "Christian films." [Lionsgate] [Cuss: 3 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 100]



TOPGEAR 18

Season 18 (on 3 discs) explore all things automobile with their travels across India, Italy, Germany and China. This BBC Television series is obviously for car enthusiasts, but goes to the extreme, so as to even entertain those that wouldn't know the difference between a carburetor and a fuel filter. Funny, exciting and even a little educational. [BBC]



THE HM MAGAZINE PODCAST IS ALWAYS FREE

PODCAST.HMMAG.COM

8:46

This drama takes several fictional characters and maps out their everyday lives on September 10th and 11th in 2001 – from a middle-aged couple from Boston preparing to fly to their daughter/son-in-law's place in LA to several workers in the World Trade Center. It's extremely touching and helps us remember what happened and how was immediately and permanently affected by the terrorist attacks that day. [Virgil] [Cuss: 2 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 80]



HELLBOUND

As this issue's "Industry Profile" explains, this here's a documentary on the controversial and much-hated subject of hell. The up-close and personal interviews with the Westboro Baptist people are fascinating to witness (As it puts a visual answer to the question of "...is this for real?"). The crew interviews a host of folks about the topic of hell, including Deicide's Glen Benton, Mark Driscoll, Ray Comfort, Bob Larson, William Paul Young (author of *The Shack*). Divisive and compelling viewing for a simple, scholarly theological study. Give Director Kevin Miller much credit for asking the tough questions to a wide group. [Area 233]



LIFEstyle



GRACE | MAX LUCADO

The subtitle reads: *More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine* and the content inside endeavors to expound on both statements. This brilliant speaker and author has keen insight into the danger and radicalness of grace, which makes reading this so exciting and grateful to a God that consistently relates to us with grace. [Thomas Nelson]

I BLEED DARK | ROB & TREY WEDDLE

These two longtime HM Magazine readers (and father and son) share many poems written in response to chronic pain and the life and heavy metal and gothic culture around them. Some are written to Jesus, many are about Him and some are written to those lost around them. [Private Edition]



TIME WILL TELL | EDDIE UPNICK

This fun novel starts in 2133 with a different reality and involves a time travel mission to right the history of Nazi Germany as we know it today. The constructed reality the story rests on is out-there, but easy enough to pick up on and follow. [Label Man]

52 LITTLE LESSONS FROM IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE | BOB WELCH

Take a holiday classic film and dissect it for life lessons. Good idea? The answers might surprise you in this book, as a writer's workshop teacher and leader dives deep into the intelligence and richness of Frank Capra's 1946 film. While it may sound like an overly scholar-like approach, the read is quite entertaining and is able to achieve that warm inspirational high that our hearts long for. [Thomas Nelson]



books & graphic novels

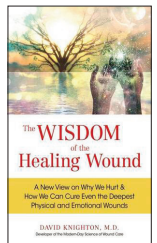


GLORIOUS RUIN | TULLIAN TCHIVIDJIAN

With a subtitle like "How Suffering Sets You Free," you know you're onto something deep and refreshing here. It's the stuff that our refrigerator magnets should be telling us. It's unpleasant, makes us queasy to contemplate, shakes our addiction to comfort to its core and yet comforts us with a Fatherly love like Scripture itself. I love books like this, because they both make me think and also burn inside the pit of my stomach with a resonating passion that I want to embrace and live. [David C. Cook]

THE WISDOM OF THE HEALING WOUND | DAVID KNIGHTON

One of the world's leading experts on wound healing and founder of the Wound Healing Institute at the University of Minnesota Medical Center shares his insight into the body's natural wounding and healing process, which offers widespread understanding to its workings and its goodness. Learning about the body's physical capabilities toward healing is inspiring, while the emotional and spiritual side is liberating. [HCI Books]



SINNER'S CREED: A MEMOIR | SCOTT STAPP & DAVID RITZ

An autobiography of Creed's lead singer is sure to be a must-read for those who count themselves among the band's fans. But you can still think "meh" of the biggest of American post-grunge band's output and still be caught up in the drama of Scott Stapp's *Sinner's Creed*. Suffering through troubles with an absentee biological dad and sadistic stepfather, church-related weirdness and the managerial and medicinal pitfalls of superstardom as Stapp has, it has been pretty dramatic for the guy. The constant for him's been a Christianity that has gone through various states of strength and weakness throughout his life. *Creed's* closing finds Stapp in a reasonably good place, but his vulnerability and transparency make for a cautionary, but addictive, bio'. Something like Stapp's rock hero, Doors dude Jim Morrison, but with a far happier ending. [Tyndale] Jamie Lee Rake

BOLD AS LOVE | BOB ROBERTS JR.

Ever wanted to break out of your loveless little sphere and give something authentic and enduring to another human? This might be your handbook, as the author use his own experience in reaching out to genuinely love those of different faiths, beliefs and cultures around him. He teaches us to be missional in how we think and act. [Thomas Nelson]



The Christian & I

WITH KEMPER CRABB

Concerning “Jeus is My Girlfriend” Songs: Observations on the Imbalances of Today’s Worship (Part the Fifth)

We’ve seen in this series that contemporary worship music has become dominated by songs modeled on romantic, experiential, subjective musical expressions. We’ve further seen that, though such songs are a legitimate stream of Biblical worship expression, they have been historical and Biblical worship models (such as the Psalms or the Book of Revelation) held in balance with objective, doctrinal song content.

We then began to investigate how and why such an imbalance has occurred in arriving at such an experiential overemphasis. We began by seeing that the deep alienation between God and mankind engendered by the Fall leads men to see the world dualistically, as split between the “pure” spiritual realm and the flawed and imperfect physical world, a view which is a result of the simultaneous and inescapable knowledge that men have rebelled against their Holy Creator while they attempt to suppress that inescapable knowledge (Romans 1: 18-32).

The resultant spiritual schizophrenia of Fallen mankind leads men frequently to see the human condition as, at best, a necessary evil from which men need to escape. This conviction is held despite the fact that men know that God has created the cosmos as a physical/spiritual intertwined unity (though they try to suppress that knowledge; cf. Romans 1:18-20), and is a conviction frequently held as well by Christians (who should know better) despite the fact that Christ Jesus died and rose to reconcile the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5: 17-19, etc.).

The world is not sundered between the physical and the spiritual, but is rather infected by sin, for which Jesus atoned by His Death. Nonetheless, the dualism which informs all pagan thought has dogged the Church’s thought and actions despite the Revealed Truth in Scripture that Christ has reconciled the world to Himself, and the dualistic pagan view has brought about, ultimately, the perceived split between the subjective and objective poles of faith and worship which informs the imbalance in worship music today.

That imbalance was carried forward and institutionalized by educated converts in the Early Church, hugely influencing the monastic impulse within the Church, which captured the leadership in the same period, and informed the official view of the preferred and highest spiritual state of being, holding a dualistic view out as the substrate of a truly godly worldview.

The Late Middle Ages were further influenced by the transmission of lost Aristotelian writings, which only reinforced monastic dualism, and reinforced the

separation of “the spiritual” realm from normal life.

The Renaissance, which was given impetus largely by the European rediscovery of Platonic (and thus dualistic) writings, further exacerbated this split between the spiritual and “normal” life (a sort of Nature/Grace split), and the Reformation was in part a corrective reaction against this unBiblical and anti-Incarnational viewpoint, and for a while (at least in the Protestant countries), doctrines espousing the priesthood of the believer militated against dualism, holding that every area of human life was inherently spiritual.

However, in some of those countries (such as Germany), a sort of cold orthodoxy set in and hardened, and by the late 1600’s, a reactionary movement arose in Germany called Pietism, which, in an effort to counteract the perceived arid intellectualism of the religious status quo, the Pietists emphasized experience of God over intellectual or doctrinal knowledge of Him, associating the emotional aspect of experience with the realm of the spiritual, and reintroduced and reemphasized a dualistic split between spirituality and normal life, for the first time tying experiential emotionalism to an upper-level spiritual realm, considered to be superior to the rest of life.

Pietism promoted a number of Biblical emphases (experience and emotion are important aspects of Christian life), but unfortunately deemphasized other vital aspects of the balanced Biblical view of life, associating experiential emotion with a “superior” realm of faith.

Pietism was very influential with the Wesley brothers (John & Charles) and George Whitfield, the instruments of the First Great Awakening in Britain and America (which lasted from about the 1730’s until the 1750’s) and in the resultant Evangelical movement which resulted from that revival. Another revival, the Second Great Awakening erupted in the late 1700’s, lasting until the mid-1800’s, which advocated emotional experience in an even more pronounced fashion, a theological innovation which has influenced mightily the revivalist perspective amongst Baptists, Methodists, Assemblies of God, and Presbyterians, etc., and which was reduced to a technique to bring “revival” by manipulating emotional response in the teaching of the very influential Charles Grandison Finney, a leader in the Second Awakening.

Revivalism has informed the Evangelical Church for over a century, institutionalizing a viewpoint that recognizes emotional experience as the highest expression of spirituality: the goal and evidence of a true spiritual encounter. We’ll examine the impact of this perspective on contemporary Christian attitudes of worship in future articles, Lord willing.

[kempercraab.net]

Guest editorial by Chad Johnson

Eager waiting.

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."
—Romans 8:25

But if we hope for what we do not see. Hope is beautiful. A wonder most of the world does not possess. All the enemies of hope are hard at work to quench its power. Depression, worry, suicide – conditions held captive by darkness. Void of hope. Introduce hope in any given situation or circumstance; watch the atmosphere brighten. It has to. Hope puts fleshly and demonic influence on the run. Much of our Christian journey is hoping for that which we do not see. We long for heaven (future hope), we anticipate the kingdom of God infiltrating our daily lives (current hope), we desire revival in the hearts of all people throughout all the world (Heaven's hope). I have been discovering hope of a new strand ever-since Come&Live! began. My hope is simple: stay alive, glorify God. There are days and times where the enemy (and often my flesh – or both!) are hard at work to steal my hope. They slip in such ideas as: "God doesn't care for you or your family," "Your ministry will never succeed," "No one will stand with you – you're all alone." Lies. Such deceiving lies. Once recognized, there's only one thing to do with these lies. Cast them down.

Hope feels like fresh wind on the sails of arms tired of rowing.

...we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. There is no such thing as passive waiting for the believer. Christianity is active engagement of heart, soul, mind and strength. The value hope possesses is well worth the eager, expectant wait. If you are not around Christians who are expectant towards more of God's presence, pray the Lord drops awakening in your midst. It is relatively easy to experience occasional hope, it's another to learn to steward hope as a normal position of the faith-filled life. Paul does not give us room to only occasionally hope (either when it's convenient or when everything is flowing smoothly). Hope, like faith, is a substance of the Spirit. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). If you are lacking hope, the Holy Spirit is more than willing to give it. Get around people who are eagerly waiting with perseverance. I believe this stance of hope applies to every condition we face. Hope begins with the salvation of our souls, it then works its way through every obstacle we face in life: emotional scars, weights of the world, sickness/disease, financial distress, insert problem/challenge/issue/trial here. Hope lifts our eyes to see clearly who Jesus is, knowing what He is fully capable of accomplishing.

Hope ends where heaven begins. Until you are home, Hope.

Prayer: Jesus, YOUR hope shines in the face of ALL my trials. Help me hope for what I do not see, eagerly waiting for it with perseverance. Teach me the art of not shrinking back. HOPE: over my soul today. HOPE: in my body. HOPE: for my family. HOPE: at my church. HOPE: for my school. HOPE: over my friends. HOPE: to meet my needs. HOPE: through my future. HOPE: empowering my calling. I will not give up. Help me press on with eager anticipation of Your help.

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Roots & Culture

Allan Aguirre

of Olive Trees & Wild Branches (Part 6)

The Punk Rock and Alternative genres established by bands like The Sex Pistols and Bauhaus have, through time, been replaced with mainstream hybrids and counterfeits like Avril Lavigne and Dave Matthews.

I've shared my conviction that an understanding and application of the **biblical** roots of our faith would breathe new, sound, scriptural Life into the Covenant relationship bought for us with the shed Blood of the Lamb and how our scriptural faith has been replaced with mainstream hybrids and counterfeits.

I shared how Paul, in Acts 24:14, defined Christianity as being a sect of Judaism and defended his faith by confessing that he believed "all things which are written in the Torah ('law') of Moses and in the Prophets." Paul's teaching in Romans 11 should correct our modern perspective in regards to the Jewish Roots of our faith: *"But if some of the branches were broken off [Israel], and you – a wild olive [a gentile believer] – were grafted in among them [Jews] and have become **equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree**, then **don't boast as if you were better than the branches [Jews]!** However, if you do boast, **remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you.**"* Romans 11:17-18 (emphasis mine)

We discussed Ephesians 2 and how gentiles had no Messiah, were estranged from the national life of Israel and foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise (Torah) - but now have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood (verses 12-13). We saw how Jesus has made both Jew and gentile one and broke down the wall of separation by destroying the Law of Atonement Sacrifice in his own body (the cross) (verses 14-15a).

We learned that scripturally, the law is separated into sections; the oral traditions, the Covenant and the Sacrificial Law. Ephesians 2:12 speaks of Covenant while verses 14-15a obviously speaks of Atonement Sacrifice as being "destroyed" by the cross. This did not, however, "destroy" the Covenant Law and it's observance (verse 10) with the goal being "One New Man" (verse 16).

"So then, **you are no longer foreigners and strangers.** On the contrary, you are **fellow-citizens with God's people** (Israel) and members of God's family." Ephesians 2:19 (emphasis mine)

Our root and culture as believers are founded in Torah and Israel.

Christianity remains a foreigner to the Mosaic Torah covenant embodying Messiah and has rejected the scriptural foundational root of its faith estranging it's self from the national and spiritual life of Israel.

Popular Christian teaching has stated for centuries that Jesus "did away with" the Torah (law) of Moses – **"the covenants embodying God's promise"** (Ephesians 2:12) - upon His resurrection. Actually, immediately **following** His resurrection, we find Jesus expounding to His disciples all the things in the Scriptures (Old Testament), starting with Moses, concerning Him. He then reminds them that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets concerning Him and then opened their understanding, that they might comprehend these Scriptures. (Luke 24:27, 44- 45 NKJV)

Why would He default to the authority of the Law of Moses in regards to Himself – **post resurrection** – if He had just "done away with" them? Jesus once again establishes His foundation and teaching on the Torah, post resurrection, as He did pre-crucifixion. After all, Jesus is the Word (Tanakh/Old Testament) made flesh.

Suggesting that Torah observance has been "done away with" for Jews and gentile believers in the New Testament era church – because of the resurrection of Jesus – also suggests that we should "do away with" the teachings of Jesus, the Gospels, and the New Testament writings since He did rise from the dead.

[fb/twitter: allanAguirre]



VOL. 10 – I CAN'T FIX WHAT I DON'T KNOW I BROKE | MATT FRANCIS

Looking back on my best friends through the years, no shorter than three have I been in physical altercations with. I've had no other similar testosterone showdowns, or much of anything similar to a fight with anyone else, much less someone I'm disposed against, much less someone not in my top-tier of brotherly affection.

Sweet Wood burst into my room one Saturday night, ready for blows. That may read like sexual exploration, but it was, in fact, the white, Christian rapper Sweet Wood (named in part for the Christian cross made of wood). Sweet Wood's mantra: "What would Eminem do?" The answer was, obviously, punch it out.

Sweet Wood may be my single most important friendship of my college career.

Punk stopped being cool around 2003, or more likely, overshadowed as a genre. The late '90s to early 2000s was a good time to be into pop punk, and mainstream radio agreed – giving us Top-40 singles and formative albums from bands such as blink-182, Sum 41, Green Day and New Found Glory (Green Day being one of the few bands to survive the pop punk saturation and remain on the radio throughout, though not without reinvention). Then, mainstream radio turned away from guitar based music, and much of the alternative market turned toward their new buzzword – "emo."

I was working at a Taco Bell Express one summer, the drive-thru-only version of a Taco Bell. This was also the only fast food in a college town. I gained more life experience vicariously through the exploits of my hard-lived co-workers, either frat boys from the college or washed up tailgate boys who clearly never went to college, then I have before or since. One co-worker, Ben, proved most influential – bestowing on me a little release from Dashboard Confessional entitled *The Places That You've Come to Fear the Most*. What struck me the most, however, was that, although Ben heralded the release as earth-shattering, he never even made it to side two of the LP ... he loved the first five tracks so much that it was all he ever listened to or even heard. He was too afraid the latter tracks wouldn't meet his expectations set forth, that he dared not risk being let down and thereby having the album's quality diluted by mediocrity.

To avoid the semantics of emo, given that, like most amalgamated genres, there is a lot to argue about qualifiers, I'm using the term as it was used by and to me then – an offshoot of punk, framed by a sixteen year-old. Dashboard Confessional was the first I heard the designation, before "emo" became a dirty word synonymous with boys dressed like girls and self mutilation. No, it was a time when men with their acoustic guitars had feelings, and they weren't afraid to express those feelings, leaning against car hoods in white t-shirts where Bruce Springsteen possessed them through cans of hairspray.

I had my Dashboard Confessional summer. Whether you were in love, (or more likely) looking or recovering from it, there was a song to sing.

And "emo" was everywhere – it applied to the dual-vocal attack of Taking Back Sunday; the yell/sing over pop-acoustic styling's of Dashboard; the brutal, jaded lyrical honesty of Pedro the Lion; and the ragged post-punk of bands like Anberlin and Twothirtyeight. My essential emo album was *Regulate the Chemicals* by Twothirtyeight, produced by James Paul Wisner, the wizard behind other genre mainstays as *The Moon is Down* and the first four of Dashboard's confessionals. Twothirtyeight would largely forego the up-tempo

of punk. The songs often started in menacing, minor key drone before blasting into heavy, exciting parts. This is deep ... I have to punish myself through the boring parts to get to the sizzle. It was all kind of thrilling, and in turn, stood to punctuate the words of frontman Chris Staples. When he mumbled over sparse guitars and plodding drums, you were entranced – it was like your speakers leaned in close to tell you a secret. When he shouted over heavy distortion and clashing cymbals, you were captivated by the intensity and sudden shift of dynamics. It set you up to knock you down.

There was a resignation to the music. "Sometimes you look so beautiful, but love is just a chemical passing through my head." The lyrics sounded of pessimistic epiphanies sprung after years of toiling in idealism – even on their most upbeat track (the punk blast of "Coin Laundry Loser"): "Keep the love ones posted/Someday they will have to come and bail you out." This was the perfect soundtrack for the brooding teenage angst that typically follows the grandeur of adolescent possibility, where once challenged to reach any height now stuck with four years of clipped wings and high school banality. For this reason, depression felt profound.

Sweet Wood and I were making a movie. It was semi-autobiographical, as in it took some aspects of Sweet Wood's life (his aspiring rap career, the fact that he was the most polarizing figure on campus) then generously added fictional elements – such as a fan base for his music. It was a beat-the-odds (and rapping rival) to win the girl, rising-star story arc, as seen in nearly every biopic ever. The only problem was, though Sweet Wood was content to pad out his accomplishments, he wouldn't allow for any human failings that would serve the narrative and add depth to a flawed character.

However, our greatest disagreement (which came to blows) was over the soundtrack. Sweet Wood wanted the score to be rap music. Now, admittedly, this makes perfect sense – being that it's a movie about rap (aptly titled: "I Am Rap"), and, from his perspective, rap music resonates emotionally. From my perspective, I wanted an emo-indie soundtrack in Twothirtyeight. That was the music to pull the emotional punches I was trying to craft, taking what the movie is about on an ideological level – pursuing your dreams; specifically "Chase What Makes Your Heart Flutter" from the band's earliest release. Sweet Wood, both of the movie and reality, did just that despite many odds, and to the discouragement, of a largely white, largely commercial school population. I respect him to this day.

Sweet Wood doesn't rap anymore, and I take that personally, more so than I should. He fought against the grain of a culture that didn't understand him, and that inspired me infinitely. Sweet Wood was fiercely loyal. Despite the violent misdirection, his passion was apparent.

Passion seems to be the single qualifier for emo. Nowadays, emo seems to sit best as a phase on the shelf alongside ska. And yet, something about those bands gives them a timeless quality that outlasts the word that would attempt to classify them. Just as depression isn't a place of arrival, emo isn't a landing pad, more like a launching. Twothirtyeight is emotive, yes, quality rock and roll. It's not a place I need to go to feel confined to an emotion, but music made from an emotion. Love may just be a chemical on a neurological level. A chemical may also be what makes one's heart flutter. That may be all we're chasing. But it's so much more.

Sincerity isn't an art form, it's just a makeup of the most moving forms of art.

PICK OF THE LITTER

☆ Kingsdown

Some bands just have a charisma that pulls the listener into its sound with just a few bars of any of their tunes. The deep low end is seductive for this band, the melodies go places unexpected and the vocals of Dwain Roark are as pleasant as a hard rock sunrise. Kingsdown started in 2003 around Batesville, AR. A century old Arkansas train station became their experimental base where various styles and sounds were rigorously tested. Small crowds soon grew into packed houses, and "The Depot" became a place where lifelong friendships were born, joy was rampant, and people were impacted for the better. The band likes to focus on the love of God and endeavors to express that love to its audiences.

facebook.com/kingsdownmusic

Stone Throw Second

This Canadian band (Winnipeg) band plays a clean yet fuzzy commercial and melodic rock.

myspace.com/stonethrowsecond

Afternoons in Eden

Afternoons in Eden is your average free-spirited moon child with a deep love of music and heart full of Jesus Christ. She is heavily influenced by artists such as Fleet Foxes, Vocal Few, and Florence + The Machine. (scouted by Nick Cotrufo)

facebook.com/afternoonsineden

☆ Come Wind

Powerful, churning and inventive rock with layers of creative sounds and smart riffs.

facebook.com/comewind

Nostalgia

This power metal band from Murrieta, CA, kicks out some serious metal. The melodies and vocals are sometimes better than others, reminding me of lots of early '80s metal bands, but the playing is plenty tight.

facebook.com/nostalgiametal

9 Years Denied

Anytime you can write a melodic power metal tune and have Rob Rock sing lead vocals over it, you've got something going. Guitarist Scott Moore has good tone and smart songwriting ideas and had some good players on this tune, "Obsession."

reverbnation.com/9yearsdenied

The Rock Music

The worship team from The Rock Church has released a pretty good worship album called *Alive*.

experiencetherockmusic.com

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ISSUE #92: ROB ROCK | ANTIDEMON | MORTIFICATION | REINXED

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HEAVEN'S METAL SECTION ... WHATTYA THINK?

So ... we did it. We merged the pages of *Heaven's Metal* into *HM*. All of a sudden the sporadic Heaven's Metal fanzine is thrust into a more frequent monthly delivery status. That's great news ... and it's even better news that there's lots of Christian metal music to write about, too. And right around the corner are a lot more albums we're all itching to hear (can you say Sacred Warrior, Deliverance and Recon?). By the way, if you haven't watched it yet, check out the video that Sacred Warrior posted of one of their new songs – (youtube.com/watch?v=FcCQCIs5Tdw&feature=youtu.be&hd=1). If that doesn't get your heavy metal sweat glands opening up and pouring with excitement – well, you might be old!



Doug Van Pelt

HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE SEPTEMBER 2012 ISSUE #92

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ReinXeed

MUSIC WITH HEART AND SOUL

BY PATRIK OHLSSON/NOIZEGATE MUSIC

TOMMY REINXEED HAS BEEN SEEN IN A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS IN RECENT YEARS: REINXEED, SWEDISH HITZ GOES METAL AND GOLDEN RESURRECTION. WITH AN AMAZING VOICE AND FANTASTIC GUITAR HERO SKILLS, HE HAS BECOME A NAME ON MANY PEOPLE'S LIPS, BUT FEW KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS LIKEABLE PERFORMER. FOR HM'S READERS TOMMY REINXEED TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF AND ABOUT THE DIFFERENT BANDS HE IS INVOLVED IN.



We have seen you with various bands in recent years, but may not know as much about you. Can you start by telling a little about yourself?

What I can say about myself is that I love music and cannot imagine doing something other than music. When you read comments on Facebook and YouTube on my songs, videos and music, I'm glad to hear: "This humble and nice man is making music with heart and soul," and if people see me that way I have managed to convey it. That's the way I am – the music is about emotions and I love humor and I think the most important thing to do is to have fun. And I have! For every cover/original song I recorded/written I have enjoyed it 100% and felt that I was having fun.

The instrument I master pretty well is guitar, vocals, bass, drums and piano. I also play a little flute and fiddle, but have not put myself into it so much. I've never had video games, or been interested in mopeds, cars or things like that, so all my free time has been spent to deal with music in one way or another, and learn to play different instruments, and I have also studied very much music theory.

You are a very diverse guitarist, and master different styles with confidence. I know that Gary Moore is a big musical influence for you. Who/what more inspires you musically?

I have different influences for different things ... Gary Moore, of course, for guitar playing, but also when it comes to singing and his way of writing songs. If you are into Gary Moore, you can hear echoes in my music that are reminiscent of his.

Robby Valentine, Alan Menken, John Williams, Robert Wells and a number of different power metal – bands are also great sources of inspiration. And when it comes to singing, I would say that Michael Kiske (Helloween), Sebastian Bach (Skid Row) and Joey Tempest (Europe) are the ones who inspired me the most.

How much time do you spend practicing?

Approximately 1 - 2 hours a day, before it was probably 4 - 5 hours a day. But if you mean "practice" when I sit down to record, it's about 10 hours a day.

Do you improvise your solos?

I hear in my head how the solo should sound and then I try to play it and get it as close to that as possible. Sometimes, when I have no idea, I sit and just play until I come up with something that I like/sounds good, and these solos can take one or two hours to come up with.

You have several sponsors. Tell us a little about them.

We have a great deal with Dean Guitars, which is an incredible guitar brand. Comfortable to play and you get the sharp, heavy sound that is needed in metal. So, I'm very happy. Then we have also been sponsored by "Stay in Tune Strings" or SIT Strings and I am very pleased, for a good guitar requires good strings to sound as good as possible.

How would describe ReinXeed for someone who has not heard you? And what can you tell about the rest of the band?

ReinXeed is a power metal band that uses a lot of strings, horns, choirs and catchy melodies, fast bass drums and guitar solos along with high-sung vocals. People who like Helloween, Edguy, Rhapsody of Fire, Sabaton and Gary Moore & Europe usually like our music.

It all started when I and two friends formed a band and we came up with the name ReinXeed. When they left the band, I kept the name for my own recordings I did in the studio in high school.

When I put some songs on MySpace, I got in touch with a guy who showed my songs for Christian Liljegren (Narnia, DivineFire, Golden Resurrection) at Doolittle Group (formerly Rivel Records), who was very interested to release it on disc. So, I recorded the first album *The Light* and after that I have recorded an album/year that has been released worldwide.

We have a strong lineup of musicians that will deliver live, and a very talented drummer who will do really well at the next recording session.

You also play with Golden Resurrection, which is a confirmed Christian band. How would you categorize ReinXeed?

ReinXeed is a bit mixed, actually... The first album is like a fictional story, but the songs "The Light," "Eternity" and "Shyrheny" have a very clear Christian message. The third disc is all about various famous stories, such as "Never Lie" and "1912" is about Titanic, a big favorite subject and one of my great interests.

Yes, tell us about "1912" and the idea of using the story of Titanic.

Since I was reading about the ship in a book when I was very small, I've been fascinated by the story of Titanic. I know a lot of facts about the ship and I have seen the movie 41 times.

Was there any thought around the story of Titanic, which one can transfer into humanity at large, where everything must be the best/most expensive/fastest, without concern for people's best?

Yes, I want to convey how badly people can behave toward one another; how the rich think they have more value than if you are poor. "The greatest go first" and "eat or be eaten" one can think in those situations when it comes to saving his own life, but I think that it is more natural to think: "As long as my fellow man is saved, I am happy." Help people instead of just make sure that you are safe. You cannot afford to be selfish when it comes to other people's life.

Please, tell us about the new album.

The new ReinXeed album is called *Welcome to the Theater* and is probably the most processed record I ever done. Music-wise, I have taken the orchestra-metal one step further and used more orchestral instruments than I've ever done so far. Some songs will sound very musical – metal, but the idea is to make it feel/sound as much like film music as possible. The lyrics are inspired from different famous/great movies that you will easily recognize.

If you have seen the movies, you will recognize quotes that make it even more exciting to listen to the disk, and the idea here is to at least try to get the listener to immediately think of just the movie that the song is about. If this happens, then I feel that I have succeeded. I have played some songs and people have said, "Hmm, this feels just like I would be in a jungle," or "I get a little pirate feeling about this." When I hear that I feel that I have achieved what I wanted when I wrote the songs.

Tell me about Swedish Hitz Goes Metal. How did you choose the songs for the album?

It was me and Christian Liljegren, who decided which songs would be included. There had to be songs that people would recognize and they had to work as metal songs. I had fun when I recorded the disc and I spent many, many nights just listening to songs and wrote notes how to make them different from the originals.

What is happening now and what are the plans for the future look like?

Right now, we (ReinXeed) are rehearsing and preparing ourselves to play gigs. We aim to tour – both in Sweden and abroad, playing everywhere to get to know people and let people find out about ReinXeed.

Nothing seems impossible anymore, if you can come out of nowhere and then get up on stage before 2 million viewers (Tommy played two songs live from the Swedish Hitz Goes Metal, on Swedish national television last year) and play with people you looked up to for so long (Tommy also did a live gig with one of his favorite musicians, Robert Wells – a well-known Swedish piano player) – then anything can happen in future.



MORTIFICATION: ONE WAY...

BY DOUG VAN PELT

We often hear some repeating messages from you, like: "We are happy that we released *Scrolls*, but would the public please stop asking for *Scrolls 2*?"

Scrolls was a ground-breaking album for sure. I know at each Mort show that is expected that I finish the Set with "Scrolls..." (the title track and "God Rulz"). That is a given with every band – the classics! But great bands progress and bring in new and unique elements to new albums. Sure, some bands stick to the same format. Mort always sounds like Mort, but with different members and influences the flavors do change with each new release. With *Scrolls*... a lot of the lyrics were starting to become theologically questionable. So, with *Post Momentary*... I told the guys that the lyrics would need to be checked and re-checked and the music was going to contain elements of thrash and traditional metal as it had on *Break The Curse* and the self-titled. Plus, I was going to bring in an extra vocal perspective.

Post Momentary... gained massive accolades in the press, but, of course, led to that lineup splitting. The split was needed anyway, because we were not on the same page as Christian people. I still play death metal and grind. But there are always going to be other new and different elements. True art is uniquely diverse within its own framework. Great bands, like Napalm Death, who have progressed here and there cannot seem to move one inch either way with people whining at them!? I love it when they get creative. My fav Napalm songs and albums are the ones that present something new. Like the song "The Wolf I Feed" on their latest album, *Utilitarian* and their entire *Diatribes* album.

"Sharing mp3s is stealing music and it's crippling the lives of musicians."

The laws of our lands and of the Bible are very clear. On every CD and on every DVD and film people can read that to "Copy, file share or bootleg music and film art is illegal and those caught face penalties..." and yet music fans steal from the net, because "everyone is doing it." I told my son when

he was very young. If you hear these words – "But everyone is doing it" – say no to it, because that statement always relates to doing the wrong thing by the laws of our land, or yourself and most importantly by God.

Stealing is stealing! 1 Corinthians 6:10 states: "Thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Sure we all sin. I am not perfect. I am so flawed in so many areas of my life. However, I reflect and repent everyday and have the intent to go and sin no more. If I fail, I repent again. But holiness becomes a habit when you practice it daily – combined with prayer and the reading of God's Word. So, for internet thieves – if you call yourself Christian, then you are under grace. But you must repent and go and sin no more. Internet music theft is a reflection of today's instant satisfaction society. The joy of waiting is a lost beauty. I remember in the '70s and '80s the joy of waiting till the day you could line up at the store at midnight for the album release of one of your favorite bands. So exciting! I still hold myself to this today. I wait to listen to the real CD release and, because I know release dates, I always purchase the deluxe editions. I love music art and I am a collector. Often I will save for six months just so I can purchase both the deluxe CD and vinyl of my fav bands' new releases.

People have said to me, "Judge not lest you be judged." The biblical context of that is Romans 2: "Judge not lest you be judged, because you do the same things." Sorry! I have never stolen a song in my life! Sure, in the old days I put records on cassette to listen to in my ghetto blaster and later my cars, but my friends and I bought our own records. We listened to different bands and so heard music from each other. But I have found as I travel through life I pick up on the old bands my friends liked, because of the memories of the time. We all had very limited money. But we all loved and collected rock and metal art.

Internet stealing has brought down they biggest of the big Bands and labels. Roadrunner just went under!!!? Why? Because Warner cannot



fight the destructive practice of internet thieves ... and people are getting caught and fined. A recent major U.S. headline stated: "Supreme Court won't hear appeal from student hit with \$675,000 music downloading fine!" Watch out folks, this guy file shared just 13 songs! You could be next! Thieves get fined and go to jail. It is as pure and simple as that. Worse still, unrepentant thieves do not inherit the kingdom of God. Does that not frighten you? I am happy to say my son is an ardent collector of his favourite metal bands on CD. He has 50 in his collection already and his friends are following his lead. Why his friends? Because they are young, aspiring metal musicians and their dreams are being stolen from under them. Sad, but true!

Mortification will probably end soon, because of my health issues, economy, etc. Mortification will never end! My art will never end! My Gospel music art ends when God takes me home. I love what I do and things can only get better from here. They cannot get any worse! I am surviving in music mission, because of many people who are true that purchase my releases. Sure, I have cut the number of pressings right down. But they are picking up again. Praise God! My two favorite artists in secular metal are Lemmy from Motorhead and Joey DeMaio from Manowar. I pray for these guys everyday, just like I have Iron Maiden, Megadeth, W.A.S.P. and Anthrax. From all these bands, members have in recent years accepted Jesus as their savior. And so there must be many of us praying! People like Lemmy and DeMaio are so true to rock and metal that they do not care about looking foolish in the way they go about doing what they do. If you like them, great! If you don't, they simply do not care. Their art is their art and that is it. True metal people! I am happy to be seen as a fool for Christ!

You developed your singing voice in the past couple of years. What led to this? Why did you do it? How does it help on a practical level and specifically how did it help on this latest *Scribe...* album?

I have always loved heavy music from the '70s and Gospel rock and metal into the '80s. As with the radical change up in vocal style on *Post Momentary Affliction*, I have always wanted to expand my vocal range. When Lincoln, Andrew and I started Wonrowe Vision in 2009, it was to explore our love of '70s and '80s heavy rock and metal and even a touch of punk. With the debut, *Mission Invincible*, it was all about finding a way to express this in our own unique way ... with the influences of Deep Purple, Motorhead, Status Quo, Sabbath, NWOBHM, Resurrection Band, Jerusalem and Daniel Band. On the album I was still phrasing rather than singing. I will never be Halford or Dio, but don't need to be. Some of the best bands from 30 years ago

simply had clean singing. Bands like Anvil and Angel Witch. The vocalists are not world class, but simply sing catchy rock metal tunes. I took some vocal coaching lessons and now Lincoln and Mark McCormack coach me. Having Linc back in Mort and also in Wonrowe Vision is awesome! He is such a great musician. Together with Andrew we have a great little team and we are all men of God and we are all on the same page with music and Gospel vision. I have introduced the clean singing on *Scribe Of The Pentateuch*, the new Mortification release, on the title track, the very traditional metal "In Garland Hall" and "The White Death." It works well, just like the radical change-up I brought in on *Post Momentary*... If you like it, great. If you don't, then keep your negatives to yourself and buy an Antidemon CD. (laughs) If you want *Scrolls 2*, Antidemon's *ApocalypseNow* is it, and better!

You have a deep love for what you call "Jesus metal." If you had to, how would distill or describe this form of music? What do you really think about artists in the Christian scene that sing about life from a biblical perspective or whose song lyrics, between-song banter at shows or interviews show a lack of "evangelism zeal?"

Let us change some words here. Rather than call it Christian metal or even Jesus metal, let's call it Gospel metal. Or Gospel rock. That makes it pure and simple. In order for music to be considered Gospel rock or Gospel metal it must contain what? The Gospel of Jesus! Gospel rock and metal should be the only music sold in Christian bookstores, in online Christian music sites, covered in Christian magazines and presented at Christian music festivals. If it is not Gospel rock and metal, then why not battle it out in the mainstream where it belongs?

Reason! It is way too easy to get sales in the Christian marketplace for people in any distant way that have a connection to "the Church." An artist with strong connections to Gospel rock in the past are often now opting to sell social commentary music and pass it off as Gospel music? The "Christian music scene" – if such a thing exists(?) – is a reflection of "the modern politically correct Church." No wonder it is all going downhill with prominent ministers like Rick Warren and Robert Schuller joining with Muslims to start the movement called Chrislam. There is no worse evil than this right now ... and Christian rock follows suit with a well accepted "gospel(?)" label promoting an overtly Islamic band? What the...?

So, as with praise and worship music, true Gospel rock and metal is music that glorifies Jesus, is evangelistic and uplifting for the Christian listener, also.



I thank God for praise and worship music and hymns in our churches and sold in the CBA and online from praise and worship sites. Most unfortunately, this is not reflected in modern "Christian politically correct rock and metal." Why is this so? It is all a part of the falling away where hearts grow cold! Read 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Sure, I sing about social issues just like Rez, Jerusalem and Tourniquet do also, but all of our true Gospel rock and metal points to Christ and the Bible as the only answer. It is not purely social commentary. If I want to listen to social commentary, I will buy U2, Midnight Oil or Napalm Death albums! So, I am not against social commentary or great secular music art. However, it does not belong under the title of Gospel music – not in a million years! It belongs in the mainstream of music. Gospel rock is also needed in the mainstream! Stryper, Barren Cross and Mortification have all proved that Gospel metal can see lives won for Jesus in the secular music realm as well as uplifting rock and metal fans who are Christians.

Tourniquet is on the cover of the new (September)/this issue of HM Magazine. What do you think of that? What do you think of Tourniquet?

Tourniquet are great! Well worthy of being on the cover of HM. Sure, their music has a lot of social commentary, but their music points to Jesus and the Bible as the only answer. For example, "Ark Of Suffering" is about the abuse of animals. But simply by title, the song points to the Bible. I did some vocals over the phone which was pure scripture for Tourniquet's *Microscopic View...* album. "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet forfeits his soul." My vocals are on the title track!

Some people might be put off by your strong statements at times. What might these people be surprised to learn about you? (I assume it'll be your fun-loving nature and not-so-legalistic views of things). Share what you'd like...

I am a goofy fun-loving guy. I love Jesus. I love my family and I love my rock and metal. I like to make people laugh. It does not matter whether

they are laughing at me or with me. I am self-deprecating to the point that I penned songs like "Noah Was A Knower," "D.W.A.M. Daniel Was A Mosher" and with Wonrowe Vision radical parrot! The debut Wonrowe Vision CD *Mission Invincible* is totally goofy and self-deprecating.

For goodness sake, have a laugh with me or at me! Part of the reason I lived through being given two hours to live twice is the joy that is in my heart. Plus, I am happy and content and neither are a promise! It is like a gift. I am kind and encouraging and everyone who has been in Mort and is no more, now has a platform from which they can build their own music. I have always provoked everything for everyone who has worked with me. If people hate me for that, then that is their problem! I do as God leads and after an angel visitation in 1996 I have seen a glimpse of Heaven. I do not need any convincing as to what I do and what I say in and about Gospel art is correct. Pass it all by the Bible and try as you may to see I am wrong, it is not possible, because my life stems 100% from my Christian faith. But more blessed are those who believe and follow Jesus without seeing Heaven.

What are the hardest songs to play off Scribe?

"In Garland Hall" is difficult and so is "The White Death."

What would be the short list of the hardest songs to play of the entire Mort catalog?

"Live By TheSword," "Nocturnal" and "Gut Wrench" are all difficult Mort songs to perform. "Hammer Of God" I find the easiest and most fun to play along with "Priests Of The Underground."

Blessings To All!

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Rob Rock

DRIVEN AND COUNTING DOWN

BY JEFF MCCORMACK

On *Countdown*, the lyrical content is more up-front and obviously of Christian nature than the previous Driver album. How does the rest of the band feel about your lyrical approach?

I actually think that they don't mind at all. Considering the band atmosphere and talent, it's always fun when we're together, and the lyrics are in my hands, so they don't even worry about that. I think they trust Roy Z. and I to make really good songs and they know the message has been there from the beginning, but they also know that we are all professional musicians, and in the end, it rocks to the hard rock/metal audience we have.

I have owned that original Driver cassette tape EP since it came out way back when. The *Sons of Thunder* release was basically a vindication of that old tape, by finally bringing it to the public in all its amazing glory. With the release of *Countdown*, it appears Driver is becoming more of a permanent musical fixture. In our interview last time I asked if you considered Driver a band or a project, and you said it is a band. Since that time, what do you feel Driver has done to solidify that idea? Was there much touring as a band?

Well, we've done some gigs since then, we did the Bang Your Head festival in Germany, and some gigs in the Los Angeles area as well. That's when the glue came together and really helped us gel when we were recording the *Countdown* album.

You have released some amazing work under your own solo project and Driver is just as amazing, though very similar in style to your solo releases. What would you consider the main difference between the two bands, and do you see a need for any further solo releases, or could it all be done under the Driver umbrella?

I see Driver and Rob Rock as two different sounds and styles. Driver is more "live" and relaxed and Rob Rock Band is more heavy and polished. I also think Impellitteri is more technical and a whole other trip. I have three active bands and they are all different to me, and all release a different side of my writing and voice. I see another solo release in my crystal ball, Lord willing, as well as a future Impellitteri release when the time is right. Meanwhile, I am enjoying the new Driver *Countdown* CD and the warm welcome it is receiving.

I suppose the main difference is that Driver is more AOR and Rob Rock is more melodic metal with emphasis on heavier tones and riffs, and more backing vocals in the mix. I'm a bit more microscopic with my solo releases, and I let the "live" performances that have been captured speak in the Driver material. These different approaches make a difference to me, as well as the song selections and writing goals that I set for each album.

Since much of the *Sons of Thunder* release came from re-recording the old catalog and adding some new songs, how

was approaching this new Driver album different this time around? You mentioned in our last interview that you all had about 30 songs before *Sons of Thunder*, did you bring those to life this time around, or was it starting from scratch?

We started with three or four more songs from the vault and then we proceeded to write more new songs from there. We focused on a classic production approach in the early Ozzy, early Dio vein, using acoustic drums and little modern effects to capture the timeless sound of those albums, as opposed to trying to make a super modern 2012 recording. The music is more fitting to the hard rock sound that people know and love back when the band was first formed. We wrote the new songs with an entire album in mind and wanted to capture the band as true as it is live, so the approach was not much different than the *Sons of Thunder* album in that respect.

Your album with Joshua is one of the most sought after and loved in the Joshua catalog. Now, he is about to reissue a remixed and remastered edition of the *Intense Defense* album. Have you had any contact with him on this reissue, or any plans to work with him again in the future?

There's been little contact concerning the re-issue, but we do keep in touch on Facebook and talk of working together again someday. The Lord's timing is best.

Your last album with Impellitteri was amazing – as predicted; have there been any plans for another album with them soon?

Chris is busy with Animetal, a Japanese based super-group type band. It is doing well, so they will run with that for as long as possible, I suppose. We have talked of recording another Impellitteri album together again in the future, but we don't know when that will be at this point. We are both very happy with our last *Wicked Maiden* CD.

When the first *Project Driver* release came about, you were a new name to the scene. Now you have spent 25 years making a name for yourself. Has there ever been any talk at any time over the years of a possible second M.A.R.S. project album? If approached would you be interested – and why/why not?

That would be very cool to me. I haven't heard any talk over the years from the band, but I have heard inquiries from labels and industry people, but it never materialized. I'm not sure what everybody is doing now, except for Rudy Sarzo, who is playing with Chris Impellitteri in the Animetal band. Because of the experience and following I have now, I'd be very interested in making another record with the M.A.R.S. Project, and I think it would be a blast to finally tour with that band.



If you had a chance to put together and sing with your own super group today, who would some of those musicians be?

Oh man, I don't know... I'd have to think long and hard about that one.

Who are some of your favorite modern bands these days?

Disturbed, Godsmack, Nickelback... I like the energy and sound of these bands, although I don't necessarily appreciate some of the lyrics, if you know what I mean.

You have done a lot of guest work with other bands. Have you ever been asked to work on a project, but decided to pass or have backed

out on it later? Without naming names, what kinds of reasons have/would you pass on participating in a project?

I would definitely pass on a project for lyrical reasons. Being the singer, you have to perform those lyrics in the songs, and if I don't believe or condone the content then I'm not doing it. I'm not a black and white word for word judge on lyrics, but I won't do it if I feel uncomfortable. Not everything has to be blatant either, in my estimation. I try to reach people that have never heard of me or situations where awareness can happen. I also have to like the music and melodies. Well, the music and the main writer I suppose. I also seem to adjust melodies to make them my own, as well as some lyric adjustments here and

there, too. If I have freedom to put myself into my performance, that's when things work out best.

You are known for your melodic metal sound musically, which is consistent on pretty much everything you have done. Have you ever tried, considered or desired to try something in a totally different direction? If so, what style have/would you like to try your hand at?

That would be country first, then rap! Ah ... no! I really love to rock, so that's what I do. I like to be versatile in my music, with ballads and speed metal type vibes, or classical vibes, but in the end, I think I would still be Rob Rock, in whatever I do. I wouldn't mind a try at Gospel type music, but I'd still need some kind of meat to it, because I want to make music that I enjoy listening to myself.

How often do you get to play out live (with any of your bands/projects)?

Definitely not enough. I've been all over the world and have done shows in amazing places and with many great bands on the bill, playing festivals and tours, but I am not tired or bored, so I'm still eager to play live, especially in North and South America. Europe and Japan have been great to me and I'd like the chance to perform more in the Americas, and I hope the doors will open soon for that to happen.

ANTIDEMON

AS FAST AS LIGHTNING, AS HEAVY AS

IF STEVE ROWE WAS A FARMER INSTEAD OF A METAL MUSICIAN AND RECORD COMPANY OWNER, ONE COULD SAY THAT HE BET THE FARM ON THIS NEXT BAND, ANTIDEMON – A BRAZILIAN IMPORT OF THE HEAVIEST KIND. THEY PLAY MUSIC LIKE HE DIGS: FAST, FURIOUS AND DOOMY, BUT DELIVERED IN BARS AND CLUBS ALONGSIDE UN-BELIEVING METAL BANDS.

Tell us about your new album. What was different about this one?

Batista: *ApocalypseNow* is really different from the other albums for a lot of reasons. This is the first time that we haven't released something on our own, as we are doing it through Rowe Productions from Australia. It was very different for us, because we felt that we got a lot of support to go ahead, at every step of this incredible moment. After signing the contract, Antidemon got highly motivated to write this new album as Steve Rowe had asked for it. That was really something very special for us, as he has always been a role model for the entire group. We knew he was betting on us and we did everything that we could to get it done! The way we recorded was also different. We had

Ciero Luiz Ricardo, a legend in the Brazilian metal scene, produce the album and he recorded it in analog, which has changed how we think about producing a disc... We've really learned to appreciate what could be achieved with this format of recording and we were surprised, because everything turned out very real, very organic and very satisfying in the end. The new album is also different, because it is manufactured in Australia and in the way it will be distributed and released and publicized. Everything about this album has been very good for us! We are pleased to be able to continue our work of evangelizing throughout the world with it. With the previous album, we toured 27 countries on four continents and thousands of lives were actually reached out to through our music

W STINK

BY DOUG VAN PELT

and our message of salvation in Jesus Christ. We are happy, because now we are working alongside the greatest Christian metal band in the world – Mortification – the band that for us has set the example of being a missionary band and having the mission of conquering nations for Jesus Christ. It's wonderful, because we have a common vision and, with this new album, we strongly feel that we can achieve much more than in our previous 19 years of existence.

What lyrical themes have you written into this album?

Apocalypse Now, as the name suggests, talks about the apocalypse – the end times and the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. There are actually eleven tracks with a real and impacting message, and no cover ups. Tracks like "Welcome to Death," "Infernal" and "Lamento (Lament)" talk about the sad consequence of being far from God and how the eternal death of hell is something certain for people who remain so. We also have "Não Tardará (It Won't Be Long)," which talks about the return of Jesus Christ and the marriage of the Lamb. "Virus" tells us that sin is an epidemic that has infected mankind. Also there are songs that glorify God's sovereignty, which are also apocalyptic, such as "Rei da Glória (King of Glory)" and "Domínio (Dominion)." The opening track is also the title track and it declares that the apocalypse is already here ... and we're already living it today.

Anyway, this album is a cry of warning about the end times.

How or why did this develop?

I believe that God gave us every guitar and bass riff, every drum rhythm, every growled word. Everything was put together in a way so that God's work continues strongly and more strikingly. It made us grow and has kept us growing.

What excites you the most about this new album? Why?

As we said before, working alongside Steve Rowe has filled us with expectations and achievements. We are filled with hope that this album will change the course of our story and with it we can reach thousands of lives for Jesus Christ. What most motivates us is that! Rescuing lives from hell and their Salvation for the Kingdom of Light.

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HEAVEN'S
PRODUCTIONS

THE CALLING OF A NEW



Messenger

BY STEVE ROWE

In a world where Gospel rock & metal is generally less about Christianity & more about social commentary, it is no surprise that God is calling musicians out of the secular heavy rock scene to present the Gospel message. Like Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts chap. 9) – a persecutor & murderer of Christians. Suddenly Jesus appeared to him & called him to go & preach the Gospel. But why would God choose Saul, a Christian hater, to become Paul – the most influential Christian in History?

As a lead up to the story of Messenger, like so many in the secular metal & rock scene, God called frontman/ visionary Frank Herring out of the rock & roll bar scene of sex, drugs & hard partying in 2008. Frank found faith in Christ & dedicated his talents to writing songs to glorify God. In late 2008 God brought together this great group of musicians that understood Frank's music & new-found mission.

Messenger was born and are putting the finishing touches to their 2nd full-length album, *You Choose*. I have heard three of the new songs already – "The Sacrifice," "End Of Time" and "The Back Of My Mind." All are a huge leap ahead from the band's debut, *I'm Talking To You*, in both songwriting and production. When I first heard "I'm Talking To You" in 2009, it was a breath of fresh air, because it was immediately reminiscent of the true Gospel rock of the early '80s – an era of music that changed my life forever to turn, follow Christ & shout out loud the Jesus Gospel message!

Frank Herring (now 50 years of age, but some say ageless) is Messenger's lead vocalist & keyboard player. Interesting to point out that Frank is seen as ageless! Messenger's music is certainly timeless. I love classic rock! it is a style that is not a trend. It just lives on for people of all ages to enjoy! Frank is joined by Tim Tieff, aged 51, on drums and the band's veteran bass guitarist, Roy Richardson (whose year's on this earth are many). Messenger is rounded out by a younger 35-year-old guitarist, Vlad Gurin. Vlad was born in Moldova & the other three were all born in The USA, just like Bruce Springsteen, only more classic and more metal!

The mission of Messenger (in Frank's own words) is to perform wherever the opportunity arises to present their blood

of Christ-filled songs of redemption and power. With Frank's identity strongly recognized in his state, Messenger have had the opportunity to share their Jesus rock plenty. The band has performed major supporting gigs with secular rock acts as they come through town. Messenger has supported W.A.S.P., Extreme and Kix. All three of these bands being major in US heavy rock history. Just like Paul, who was known by the people of the land, so Frank is known as a stalwart of heavy rock in his home state. Thus, the impact of the band's message is heard where it is most needed! Add to this the essence of local heavy rock scene respect and you have one great mission.

Messenger also performs church-based shows and presented their Jesus rock art at the Cornerstone Festival in 2010. Frank and Vlad attend Arlington Assembly Of God with the other two senior members of the band attending Baptist churches. Messenger is an official ministry outreach of Arlington A.O.G. The Pastor of the Church is the band's council & covering – something that is essential for successful and effective ministry outreach.

Messenger's musical influences cover a wide variety of rock. Frank is particularly a Rush and progressive rock fan. Tim is big into Black Sabbath. Roy loves The Beatles, The Who, (and Frank jokes) – any band Roy's son is in! Vlad really likes Queen and a lot of newer rock. The band is paying close attention to newer heavy rock acts Alter Bridge, Daughtry and Creed. Frank says that Messenger has learned a lot from the above bands, but aims to be as original as possible. They are honored if people hear the flavors of their favorite bands in their music, but are certainly trying to be, the first Messenger.

I posed the following question to Frank: "If Messenger was around in 1985, you could have been one of the most successful Christian metal rock acts in the world. How does it feel being a classic Gospel rock band in 2012?"

Frank: "We have enjoyed support from a number of hard rock/ heavy metal fans since starting in 2009. We have had a lot of that whole, 'Oh, it sounds like '80s hair metal' thing, which is sometimes good, sometimes annoying. We hope to garner

"We have had a lot of that whole, 'Oh, it sounds like '80s hair metal' thing – which is sometimes good, sometimes annoying. We hope to garner support for this new record in its own light as well as being seen as bringing a fresh new edge to metal."

support for this new record in its own light as well as being seen as bringing a fresh new edge to metal."

I, for one, endorse Messenger 100%. The band has matured in its approach to Gospel rock both in music and in the lyrics. In 2010 Messenger recorded a live album and I told Frank at the time that, after just one studio album, that it was not a good idea. The presentation had its flaws. But the great thing that I discovered with Frank is that he is open to constructive advice.

I understand the process Frank and Messenger are going through. With the "other" band that Linc, Andrew and I do, which is Wonrowe Vision, first up I was simply testing the water to see what was tasty or not. Of course, our first album turned out well, but quite green and almost demo-sounding. Since then Lincoln has arranged all of my new songs with me and, after two years of vocal coaching, we know where we are going with album number two. That will be recorded early next year. As with Mortification, we really did not find our feet until a couple of albums in. Same went with the Lightforce demos of 1986. The ideas were okay, they just needed refining. Actually, we will be re-recording the first two songs I ever wrote for Lightforce in 1986, on the second Wonrowe Vision album.

So, I feel a kinship with Frank. Similar visionaries needing a solid team around us. Vlad is involved in a lot of the musical guidance for Messenger while they are Tracking *You Choose* with the same engineer who produced *I'm Talking To You*. I find that, in working with Lincoln especially, that I am very teachable. He is such a clever musician! I have fought against this with others I have worked with, because it was a situation

of them more wanting to "take over" rather than running with the vision and adding their talents and insights to *that* vision, which is the foundation of where the band is going.

Frank has found this quickly, with a solid lineup that supports his vision, to which they simply add their giftings. Too many cooks spoil the meal. But if a visionary presents the recipe for the future, then what he really needs is a body of people to bring that to fruition, rather than push the head chef out to create their menu. That does not work in a church setting and neither does it work in a Gospel rock or metal band. There needs to be one senior visionary and a group of trusted supporters that implements that vision. Messenger has this in place right off the bat and so have a better start than most!

Frank's vision for the future is to get signed. But in this day and age, it is possibly more advantageous to stay independent. I would love to sign Messenger to Rowe Productions and so, who knows what may happen in the future? Right now there is simply not enough money to do so and give Messenger the record deal that they deserve. But it is certainly on my heart. Similarly, AntiDemon has been on my heart. To give them the best possible record deal and to also be their servant. That has been a two-year process of simply believing and waiting for God's provision. With AntiDemon on Rowe Productions, they certainly are a kindred spirit and perfectly complement my vision for Mortification. Thus, similarly, Messenger would fit right in alongside my vision for Wonrowe Vision. If God guides and provides, then maybe that could be a reality for Messenger on album number three? See how God leads us – together in a Gospel rock mission.

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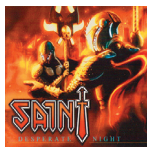
ALBUM REVIEWS



REINXEED

WELCOME TO THE THEATER

Tommy ReinXeed has done it again! Their sixth album in five years (not including his two albums with Golden Resurrection during the same time), here is yet another excellent release filled with symphonic power metal. The new tunes are inspired by different movies, and follow the same pattern of melodic metal as previous releases. If you loved their previous releases, or releases by the plethora of similar euro-metal bands like Stratovarius, Angra, Blind Guardian, etc., then you need to grab this and other ReinXeed albums. [Liljegren] Jeff McCormack



SAINT

DESPERATE NIGHT

How do they do it? I wasn't sure they could top their 2009 *Hell Blade* release, but I believe they have now. The album does not stray far from their sound, but has a slightly more beefed-up feel. The riffs are heavy as always, but the guitar tone seems more full, giving everything a heavier punch throughout. With a release this full of solid tracks, it is hard to pinpoint any as being real stand-out cuts, but if pressed, I am drawn to songs like "Let it Rock" (check out the breakdown and style changes here), and "Judgment Day" (just so grindingly heavy). While Josh does an amazing job on vocals as always, we are introduced to the band's new singer, Brian Phyll Miller, who takes over on just one track, the title track. With a slightly more smooth/melodic sound to his style (at least on the one track here), it is not too radically different from Josh's, and so we'll have to see what he has in him when he hear him on a full release. [Armor] Jeff McCormack



DANIEL TRIGGER

INFINITE PERSISTENCE

Out of the UK comes the new solo release from Daniel Trigger, a seasoned musician with years of experience and popularity in his country. He has three previous solo releases released between 1997-2003 and four releases under the band name Trigger between 2005-2009. I have been wearing out this CD full of anthem-driven melodic hard rock, and just cannot put my finger on an accurate sound comparison. Hook-laden and reminiscent to the harder-edged side of Bon Jovi, but filled with full-on gritty guitars and vocals that at times remind me of the lower singing style of Michael Sweet, but with a European accent and feel. Being new to him, I went online and listened to the Trigger material, too, and was quite impressed. Worth checking out! [Independent] Jeff McCormack



PELLEK

BAG OF TRICKS

Produced by Tommy ReinXeed (ReinXeed & Golden Resurrection), and released on Christian Liljegren's (Narnia, Golden Resurrection) record label, you know you can expect top-notch melodic metal on this one, for sure. The vocal style is not the typical soaring-over-the-top higher-octave brand, but reminiscent of vocals from bands like Kamelot and the melodic side of Symphony X. Yet another great slab of symphonic power metal from a vocalist who launched himself into the music scene when he made it to the Top 12 on Norway's *The X Factor*. Lyrically, this album deals with love, fear, trust and strength, with the message that "Life's hard, don't give up, and don't take it (or yourself) too seriously." [Liljegren / Doolittle Group] Jeff McCormack



CHARLIE SHRED

S/T

Out of Sweden comes yet another amazing metal release from Christian Liljegren's (Narnia, Golden Resurrection) record label, featuring Calle Sundberg (ReinXeed) on guitar and vocals, as well as Tommy ReinXeed himself on drums and handling the production duties on this release. Their influences include bands like Metallica, Iron Maiden, Gary Moore and others, which is noticeable in places, but they still fit more into the genre of the powerful melodic metal bands like Helloween, Kamelot, and others. It baffles me sometimes at how one country can release so much amazing music, and here is another one to add to the list. [Liljegren / Doolittle Group] Jeff McCormack



VARIOUS ARTISTS

COME ARMAGEDDON

This compilation is a two-disc release that was given away to visitors at Nordic Fest 2003 to celebrate Endtime Productions' fifth birthday. Disc one of this release is still available from the Endtime Productions website, but disc two was deleted from the Endtime catalog after Nordic Fest. The label only made 300 copies of disc two and there is no more planned. Disc one is basically a compilation that includes one song from each of the first nine Endtime releases. The bands include Extol, Anaemia, Antestor, Lengsel, Vaakevandring, and Vardoger. The song selection is great, although most fans probably already have most of the releases. However, this digipak's sweet artwork and low price make it tempting to buy anyway. Now, disc two is the very special treat if you are fortunate enough to find a copy. The disc includes pre-release songs from Antestor and Absurd2, a demo version of a new Vardoger song, and previously unreleased songs by Extol and Anaemia. All I gotta say is the Antestor song is worth the price of the disc alone. Well, Endtime Productions has done it again. All metal fans should support the label by picking up disc one. And if you can find a copy of disc two on Ebay or somewhere else, it's definitely worth the effort and money. [Endtime Productions] Matt Morrow

A special metallic blast-from-the-past review from old collaborator, Matt Morrow.

Flying Tales



by Larry Van Pelt

As Larry Van Pelt looked back over fifty years of flying experiences as a fighter pilot, combat pilot, test pilot, and general aviation pilot many memorable moments came to mind. His grandchildren convinced him to begin putting those 'moments' onto paper. The result was a weekly "flying tale." This book is a compilation of 100 of those "tales."



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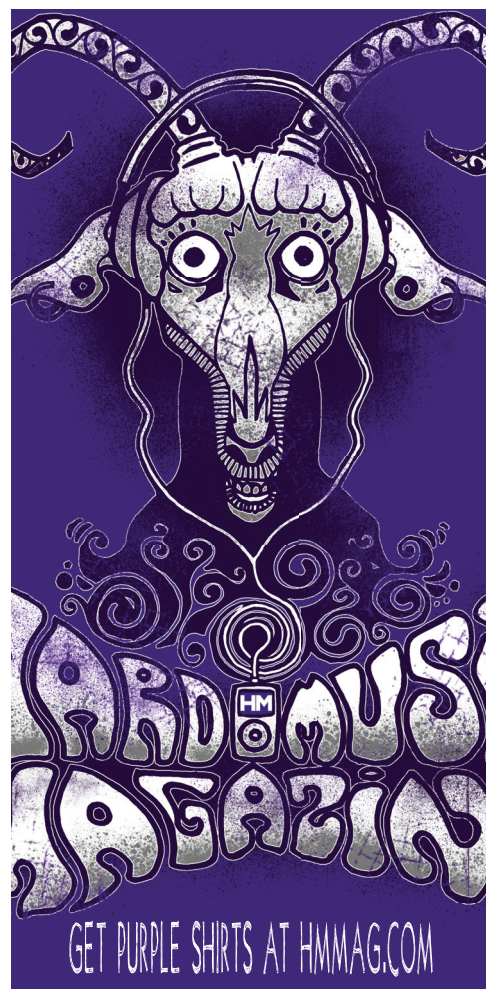
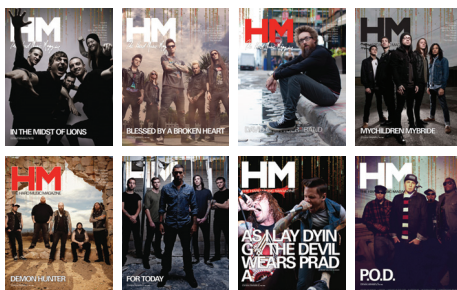
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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

THE BEST THINGS... ['07 REPRINT]

The best things in life are simple and free.

In The Western World in Middle Class America, Australia and Germany, for example, the cost of living gets higher each year. It seems like the bills get bigger and our income stays the same. Plus so many in The West over spend on Credit Cards and unnecessary luxuries to keep up with the guy next door. That means longer working hours and less family time.

One simple rule we need to follow is giving to God's work first before counting our debts. Giving of course is not just financial but also time and talents. Our Father God owns The Cattle on a Thousand Hills and He takes care of us. Give for the Joy of Giving, not doing so to get. God knows what we need but does not Bless our crazy spend ups on ourselves.

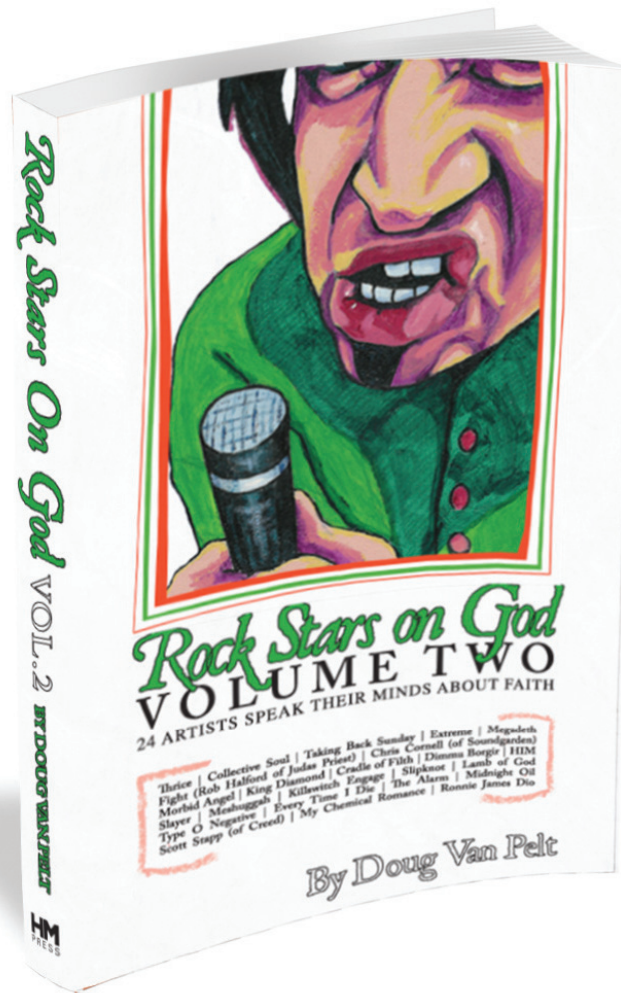
I was talking with my son Leighton the other day. I asked him what his favourite things in life were. Of course he immediately reeled off the cost stuff. Playing Tennis, Going to the movies, Games Arcades and cool new things like ipods. That is all good & healthy.

Especially playing Tennis which he does 4 times a week and we really love going to the movies for a special treat. Yes and good old dad here likes to buy the occasional CD & go see bands play which is luxury cost of course. But we don't need to cut this stuff out. Just down. Way down.

Then I asked Leighton. "But really what are the best things in life?"

He said, "I love it when you pray for me at night, tell me stories and we talk about boys stuff. Playing with the boys next door. Playing board games with Mum and hanging out with my cousins."

My favorite things are similar. Eating Dinner together as a family. Talking about the days events. Sitting in church with one arm around Kate and one around Leighton. So let us kick back and review our lives. What really is important? Maybe we can loose A lot of the expensive Fluff in life, work less hours and concentrate on what really are our most precious things. The best things in life are simple and free. Ultimately, The Free Gift of Salvation.



Q: What do you think of Jesus Christ?

A: "I thought he was a fool. I would not have died for the sins of humanity. They're not worth it. I don't believe that Christ was the Son of God."

—Peter Steele, Type O Negative (pg. 224)

Volume 2 of the popular *Rock Stars on God* series.
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